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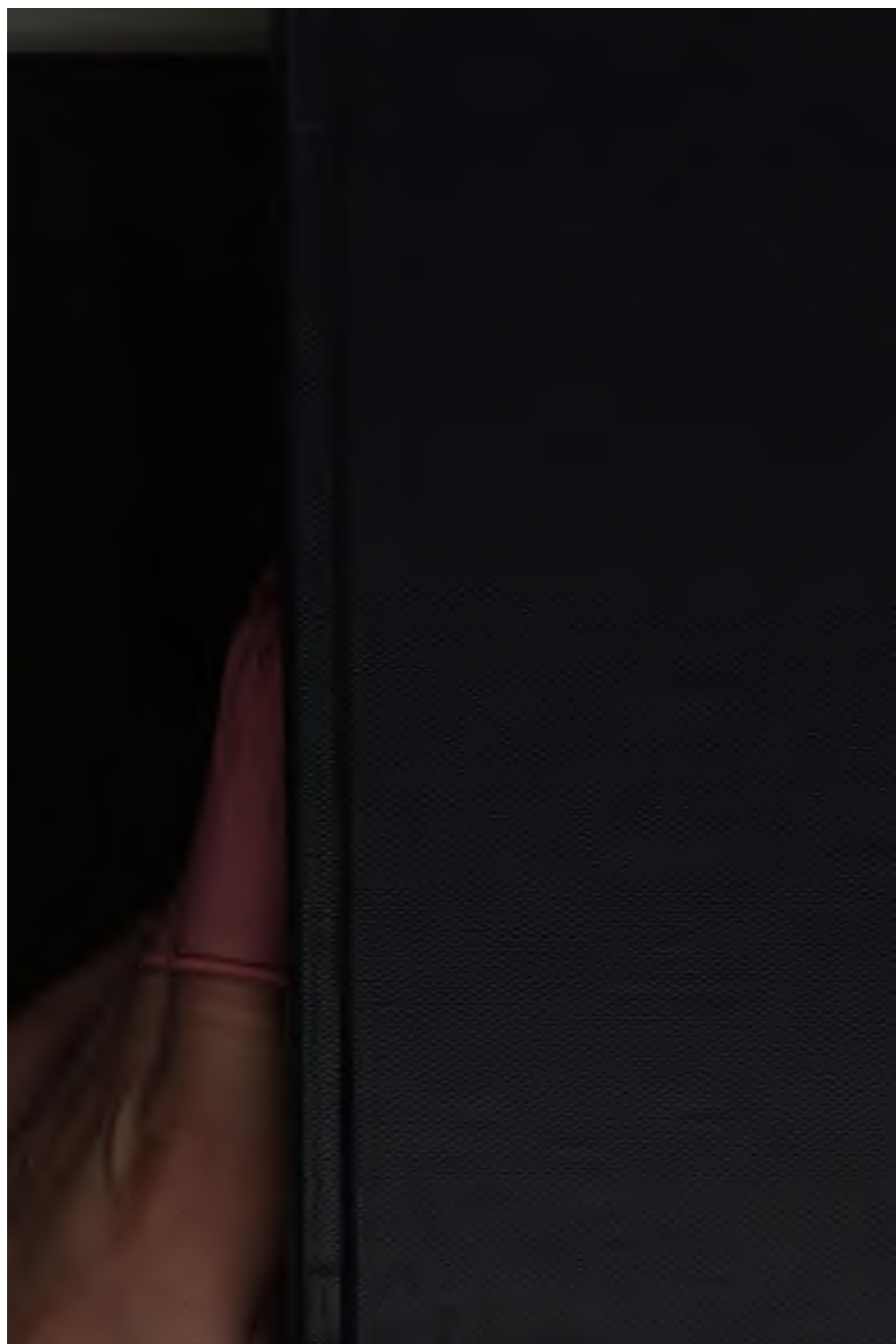
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Veneris in auctoritate



The Glory-King of Hosts.

Frontispiece.

THE EPIC OF THE FALL OF
MAN ❀ A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
CÆDMON, DANTE AND MILTON ❀

BY

S. HUMPHREYS GURTEEN, M.A., LL.D.

Graduate of the University of Cambridge ; Senior Canon of the Cathedral,
Davenport ; Author of "The Arthurian Epic," "Handbook
of Anglo-Saxon Grammar," etc., etc.

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PREFACE.

IN the following work, my object is to present, as I did in the *Arthurian Epic*, a comparative study of one most interesting niche in the poetic literature of England.

The former work was attacked by one critic, on the ground that I had failed to go outside of the lines which I had myself laid down as the limits of the inquiry; and I was accused of imperfect scholarship, because I did not drag into the study a discussion of myth-lore, or take notice of foreign developments of the narrative, when the avowed limits of the work excluded any such digressions. My object in the *Arthurian Epic* was simply to compare four distinct versions of the Arthur-story, viz., the Cambrian, the Breton, the Anglo-Norman, and the Tennysonian, as they exist at the present day; and with any speculations as to Sun-myths, or the consideration of any *foreign* versions or other extraneous, though highly interesting matters, I had no concern, in that work.

Similarly, the present volume is simply a comparative study of one niche in the *sacred* poetic literature of England; and although I have included in this study the *Inferno* of Dante, I have done so only to bring out, in still bolder relief, the strong and weak points in Cædmon's and Milton's treatment of the subject. It is not, and does not pretend to be, a dissertation on the language of the Anglo-Saxons, or on their metrical system, or a *discursus* on the many interesting questions which have been raised and discussed, both in England and Germany, in reference to Cædmon's poem and Milton's epic.

It is a comparative study of two existing poems, and does not profess to touch upon any outlying questions, however fascinating or important they may be in themselves.

In this study I have taken, as the basis of my translation of Cædmon, the text of the Junian manuscript, edited by Mr. Benjamin Thorpe, F.S.A., for the Society of Antiquaries of London (1832), collated with the original manuscript, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

The reduced fac-similes of the illuminations of the manuscript are taken from the fac-similes published in the *Archæologia* of the Society of Antiquaries of London (vol. xxiv., 1832), corrected and verified

with the kind assistance of Mr. Horace Hart, Controller of the University Press at Oxford.

The modern English rendering of the passages from the *Beowulf* in the first Chapter of this work is taken, with slight changes, from the Rev. J. J. Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.

The extracts from *Paradise Lost* are taken from Professor David Masson's scholarly edition of the works of Milton (Macmillan, 3 vols., 1874).

I am indebted to the Rev. Henry Francis Cary's admirable translation of Dante's *Inferno* for the extracts which appear in the following pages.

My translation of that part of Cædmon which relates to the "Fall of Man" does not pretend to be a *literal* translation. My object has been to give the *sense* of the original, and, in so far as possible, to keep to Anglo-Saxon modes of thought and of expression. In passages where the text itself is evidently corrupt, or where the wording or meaning is doubtful, I have endeavoured to express what, by long living among these relics of our ancestors, in study and thought, seems to me to be the most likely meaning of the words.

To Professor Masson I am indebted for far more than his valuable and able edition of the works of Milton. He was my earliest preceptor in literature when I was in the 'teens, and gave me my first im-

pulse in literary studies, especially in the study of Milton; and I am glad of this opportunity to acknowledge a debt which it would be impossible ever to repay, and which in any case I should prefer to regard as a life-long obligation.

S. H. G.

NEW YORK, February 14, 1896.

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INTRODUCTION.

Historical Sketch of the Revival of Anglo-Saxon Learning in England.

THE deep interest which exists, at the present day, in all that has to do with the Anglo-Saxon period of English life, would be evident from the extent of the published literature on this subject, even if we had nothing further to guide us.

The language, the poetry, the history, the political institutions, the forensic system, the ecclesiastical polity, the social customs, and the antiquities in general of Anglo-Saxon England have, each and all, been explored, in recent years especially, by some of the ablest scholars in Europe, with the result of placing in the hands of the student of this period invaluable help in the prosecution of his subject.

But, perhaps, the best proof of the deep interest in Anglo-Saxon studies, which is evident to-day in both England and America, is to be found in the largely increased number of our prominent seats of learning in which Anglo-Saxon now forms part of

the regular curriculum, and, as a consequence, in the greater number of educated men who can enjoy, as a recreation, the poetry of the Mead-hall and the cloister—the *Beowulf* and the so-called *Paraphrase* of Cædmon,—or who can read, in the original, for the purposes of their profession, such works as the *Saxon Chronicle*, Ælfric's homilies, or the Anglo-Saxon laws in Wilkins' digest, which, in a greater or less degree, are of a purely technical or professional character.

A brief survey of the gradual decay and final revival of Anglo-Saxon learning in England may serve to account for the widespread neglect which until very recent years, comparatively speaking, was the fate of Anglo-Saxon studies generally.

Previous to the Norman conquest, although the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics regarded Latin as the only language worthy of expressing their views on history, science and theology, yet the spoken language was the Anglo-Saxon. This was also the language of the laws and charters; and, judging from the numerous books of manuscript homilies described in monastic catalogues as *Sermones Anglici vetusti et inutiles*, it is reasonable to suppose that this class of writings was, for the most part, in the popular language of the country, as well as those poems which were intended for public recital by the *scops* or

minstrels. The incursions of the Danes, during the ninth and two succeeding centuries, doubtless caused the destruction of much valuable Anglo-Saxon literature. These "slayers from the North," not able to discriminate between ecclesiastical and secular property, burned monastery and tower alike, and with the monasteries perished many a rich and noted library. These daring pirates could scarcely be expected to know or to care for the extent of the loss which they thus caused.* But this cannot be said in excuse of the Norman ecclesiastics, of whom we are about to speak. By the middle of the thirteenth century, when Anglo-Saxon had sunk into its modified form of Early English, pure Anglo-Saxon writings could no longer be understood. Anglo-Saxon was, to all intents and purposes, a dead language, even to those of Anglo-Saxon descent. The clerics were the only class, before the Revival of Learning, capable of mastering the literature of the past; and they were too ignorant, too indolent, or too indifferent to attempt it. Hence, it came to pass that many an old manuscript was taken down from its dusty shelf only to be cleaned off with pumice in order to make room for some, then, more interesting Latin treatise. A case of this kind, came under our own observation not many

* *Vide* Note A.

years ago. In the library of Jesus College, Cambridge, there is an old manuscript which now contains Latin decretals; but beneath these, and especially around the margins of some of the folios, can be traced the remains of a fine copy of Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon sermons. At other times, old Anglo-Saxon manuscripts have been sewed together in order to make covers for other works. Sir T. Phillips, in some remarks prefixed to the table of "errata," in his edition of *Fragments of Ælfric's Grammar, Ælfric's Glossary, and a Poem on the Soul and Body, discovered among the Archives of Worcester Cathedral*, makes the following statement: "The fragments having been found in the cover of an old book (of which they, with some other fragments, constituted the sole stiffening), had been so much smeared with a brown paste, to make them adhere together, that it required much washing to make them, in the least degree legible." From these, and such like practices of illiterate clerics, we can form some idea of the total neglect into which Anglo-Saxon had fallen before the end of the fifteenth century.

At the period of the Reformation, and of the dissolution of the monasteries which followed, the monastic libraries were scattered, and much that was valuable was lost past recovery. At such a

crisis, when men's minds were intent upon the all-engrossing religious topics of the hour, what time could the ecclesiastics—the literary men of the time—find for such an apparently worthless study as that of Anglo-Saxon? If a man thought at all, it was upon the all-absorbing theological tenets of the day. It was not a time for the prosecution of trifling and useless studies. It was an exciting time, when every man who wrote, did so as if absolute truth were on his side, and absolute error on that of his opponent. Yet, strange as it may appear at first sight, this was the first time since the Anglo-Saxon had yielded to the Norman that the long-forgotten Anglo-Saxon writings were taken down from their dusty shelves and allowed to see the light. During this period of theological warfare the minds of men were absorbed in ransacking works on theology, philosophy, and science—everything, in fact—in support of their cherished opinions. In this way it came to pass that Anglo-Saxon writings attracted attention, their authority being called in to give weight to the innovations of the reformers.

Moreover, these writings were highly valuable, inasmuch as they could boast of antiquity, a very powerful weapon, when the contest turned, to such an extent as it actually did, on ancient traditions and customs. Yet, when the occasion ceased which

had given rise to a study of the Anglo-Saxon, these works, which for a moment had been brought forth from the seclusion of the library, were once again consigned to oblivion. The occasion, moreover, was a religious one, and the theological writings of the Anglo-Saxon clerics were the only ones which were studied. Still, although Anglo-Saxon once again became forgotten, the old manuscripts suffered less at this, than at any previous period, owing to the eagerness shown by the reformers in collecting them for their own passing purpose.

This period, however, was succeeded by an age when a pedantic affectation of classical learning thoroughly permeated the upper ranks of society. The Queen, the courtiers, the courtly-makers (as the poets were called), even the clergy, felt the infection; and the sermons of the day, like the small talk of the court, were full of quotations from profane writers. While the Queen was being flattered by men of high attainments; while the courtiers and those of less favoured rank were pandering, in this particular, to the intense self-love of their sovereign; while many of the clergy were bending to the fashionable whim of the day, in their desire to render themselves pleasing to those in power, it is no wonder that Anglo-Saxon literature was deemed of little moment, and was compelled to

give way to the more highly polished literature of Greece and Rome.

But while classical studies received the patronage of the Queen, and formed the morning pastime of the court, Anglo-Saxon studies, under the leadership of Dr. Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, began to show signs of revival. Archbishop Parker may justly be regarded as the restorer of Anglo-Saxon learning in England. He was one of the two great collectors of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of that age, and to him is due the honour of having been the first to publish an Anglo-Saxon work in England. In 1567 Ælfric's Paschal homily was published under his personal direction, and shortly after, appeared the Anglo-Saxon version of the four Gospels. This work was brought out in 1571, with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, by Foxe, the romancing martyrologist. It was the joint work of Foxe and L'Isle, who, at the instigation, and under the direction of Archbishop Parker, did all that men could be expected to do, who had to enter upon the task without dictionary and without grammar. The types for these works were cut by John Daye, by order of the Archbishop, and for neatness of style surpass any that were cast for many a long year afterwards.

We have said that Archbishop Parker was one of

the two great collectors of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of his day ; the other was Sir Robert Cotton. Archbishop Parker, possessing the fine tastes of a true antiquary, collected all the manuscripts he could find from among the ruins of the dissolved monasteries, and transferred them to his own collection ; nor, indeed, was this an especially difficult task when these manuscripts were regarded as " old and useless."

Sir Robert Cotton, born five years before the Archbishop's death, must ever be remembered with affection by all lovers of our early literature. At the age of eighteen he began his noble work of rescuing Anglo-Saxon manuscripts from the stalls of book-sellers, or from the hands of private individuals ; and at the time of his death, in 1631, he was zealously engaged in the same work—a life spent in saving from destruction these fine old relics of the past.

The Archbishop, upon his death, in 1575, bequeathed his collection to his own University and college, and they are now among the Parkerian manuscripts in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The collection of Sir Robert Cotton, more valuable than that of the Archbishop, suffered a sad fate. By the fire at Cotton House, in Little Dean's Yard, Westminster, over a hundred manuscripts were lost, burned, or totally defaced ; and the remaining ones, among which may be mentioned the only existing

manuscript of the *Beowulf*, then known, were greatly damaged. The remains of this collection, having been deposited for a time in the old dormitory at Westminster, were afterwards removed, in 1753, to the British Museum, where they may now be seen.

But Sir Robert Cotton's indefatigable industry was not lost. It is true that this was the great dramatic era of England ; but amid all the gaieties and frivolities of the day, Anglo-Saxon was not altogether forgotten. In 1639, Sir Henry Spelman published his edition of the *Ecclesiastical Laws*, and, in the following year, his son edited the *Anglo-Saxon Psalter*. The former of these scholars was intending to establish an Anglo-Saxon professorship in the University of Cambridge, but his intention was thwarted. The country at that time became the wrestling ground for the champions of the King and the champions of the Commonwealth, and amid the tumult and confusion of the hour, men had but little time to devote to the past.

In 1644, Abraham Wheloc published at Cambridge the first edition of the Anglo-Saxon translation of Beda's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and parts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under the title *Chronologia Anglo-Saxonica*, together with a Latin translation. This work was printed from one of the Cottonian manu-

scripts, collated with one of the Parkerian in the library of Corpus Christi College.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, a handful of Anglo-Saxon scholars arose, who gave to the study a new impetus and a more distinctive character.

While Sir Robert Cotton was diligently engaged in his work of collecting manuscripts, Ussher, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, was employed in a similar occupation, having been sent over to England to buy books for Trinity College, Dublin. At first, he worked in concert with Sir Thomas Bodley, who was collecting for his new library at Oxford; but shortly after, he returned to Ireland, and three years later again visited England, when he was able to number Sir Robert Cotton among his friends. During his book-hunting expeditions Ussher obtained the manuscript of a Scripture paraphrase in Anglo-Saxon, which he gave to Francis Dujon the younger, known in literature as Junius, the son of a Leyden divinity professor, and librarian to the Earl of Arundel. In 1650 this celebrated scholar left England on a visit to the Continent, and while there published, at Amsterdam, the copy of the Anglo-Saxon paraphrase which he had received from Ussher; nor did he hesitate to pronounce it the genuine, though long-lost work of Cædmon, men-

tioned by Beda, as the title indicates, *Cædomis Monachi Paraphrasis poetica Genesios ac præcipuarum Sacræ Paginæ Historiarum, abhinc annos MLXX. Anglo-Saxonice conscripta, et nunc primum edita a Francisco Junio, F. F. Amstelodami. 1655.**

It must not be forgotten, while speaking of Junius, that he laboured indefatigably to revive the study of Anglo-Saxon in England. At his own expense he procured, at Amsterdam, in 1654, a set of "Saxonic" types, which he brought with him upon his return, and presented, in 1677, to the University of Oxford.

Hitherto, as we have seen, although through the labours of Parker, Spelman, Wheloc, and Junius, some advance had been made in restoring attention to Anglo-Saxon writings, yet the student had been compelled to grope his arduous way in the dark, having no assistance at hand, and being without dictionary and without grammar. But now the darkness began to disappear, and a faint light arose to dispel the gloom in the Anglo-Saxon atmosphere. In 1659 the first Anglo-Saxon dictionary was published by Somner under the following title, *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum voces, phrasesque præcipuas Anglo-Saxonicas, e libris, sive manuscriptis, sive typis excusis, aliisque monumentis tum publicis, tum privatis, magna diligentia collectas; cum Latina et*

* Vide Note B.

Anglica vocum interpretatione complectens. Adjectis interdum exemplis, vocum etymologiis, et cum cognatis linguis collationibus, plurimisque in gratiam lingue Anglo-Saxonice studiosorum observationibus. Opera et studio Guliel. Somneri Cantuariensis. Fol. Oxonii. 1659. This work, though showing an indomitable perseverance on the part of the compiler, was very imperfect, and full of errors; but this was only to be expected in a first attempt, and no student can feel otherwise than grateful to Somner for this result of patient toil.

In 1665 Dr. Marshall, a former pupil of Junius, (from whom, doubtless, he had acquired a taste for these studies), published at Dort the second edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, together with the Gothic Gospels, as given by Junius. It was a joint work of both, but printed with the types which Junius had brought from Amsterdam.

Twenty-four years later, and thirty-four years after the publication of the first Anglo-Saxon *dictionary*, appeared the first Anglo-Saxon *grammar*, that of Dr. Hickes, in the year 1689. We learn from the preface to this work that an Anglo-Saxon grammar by John Jocelin was in existence at the time; but this has never been discovered. That such a work did exist, however, is evident from the fact that the index of it is mentioned in Wanley's *Catalogue of*

Saxon Manuscripts; and, moreover, the index itself is still preserved in the Bodleian Library. In the same collection, there are a few loose sheets of declensions by Marshall; but, as these are only fragmentary remains, we may consider the work of Dr. Hickes as the first Anglo-Saxon grammar published in England. It bears the following title, and is in Latin: *Institutiones Grammaticæ Anglo-Saxonicæ et Mæso-Gothicæ Auctore Georgio Hickesio Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbytero. Grammatica Islandica Runolphi Jonæ. Catalogus Librorum Septentrionalium. Accedit Edvardi Bernardi Etymologicon Britannicum. Oxoniæ, e theatro Sheldoniano. 1689. Typis Junianis.*

It is worthy of remark, that Dr. Hickes owed his taste for these studies to the influence of Dr. Marshall, Rector of Lincoln College, of which Dr. Hickes was a Fellow, and so indirectly to the genius of Dujon.

About this time there arose at Oxford a clique of Anglo-Saxonists, who were among the brightest lights of Anglo-Saxon scholarship that had as yet appeared. In 1692 Edmund Gibson, afterwards Bishop of London, published a new edition of the *Saxon Chronicle*, much enlarged, and containing, in addition to a new Latin translation of the text, a preface, notes, and glossarial index.

Mr. Rawlinson, in 1698, brought out the first

edition of King Alfred's translation of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius, the last man of genius produced by ancient Rome. It was copied from the transcript made by Junius, as the title informs us: *An. Manl. Sever. Boethi Consolationis philosophiæ Libri V. Anglo-Saxonice redditi ab Alfredo inclyto Anglo-Saxonum Rege. Ad apographum Junianum expressos, edidit Christophorus Rawlinson è Collegio Reginae. Oxoniæ, è theatro Sheldoniano MDCXCVIII. Sumtibus editoris, typis Junianis.* Upon the death of Junius, in 1677, his transcript passed, together with his other manuscripts, into the possession of the University of Oxford, and Mr. Rawlinson simply performed the work that, if Junius had lived, would doubtless have been accomplished by the transcriber himself.

In 1701 Mr. Benson, another member of Queen's College, issued his *Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum*, a work founded upon Somner's dictionary, and showing the marked and steady advance in Anglo-Saxon scholarship that had been made during the preceding forty years.

In 1705 an enlarged edition of Dr. Hicckes' work appeared under a new title: *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico—Criticus et Archæologicus*. This *Thesaurus* was rendered still more valuable by the incorporation of Mr. Hum-

phrey Wanley's *Catalogue of Saxon Manuscripts*, preserved in the libraries, public and private, of England. This *Catalogue*, or *Liber Alter*, is one of those works, the full effect of which it is difficult to overrate. It was invaluable at the period when it appeared, not merely as containing a description of manuscripts and their whereabouts, but as forming a valuable book of reference, pointing out to the scholar the quantity and nature of Anglo-Saxon literature which then remained in manuscript, and is of importance to the Anglo-Saxon scholar of to-day as indicative of manuscripts that may still be extant.

In 1699 Mr. Thwaites, the third Queen's man we have had occasion to mention in connection with this era, published the first and only edition of the *Saxon Heptateuch*, following it twelve years later by a small *Saxon Grammar*.

This, as we have already said, was the brightest period of Anglo-Saxon scholarship previous to the present century; but the crowning production of this age was the work of a lady. In 1715 appeared *The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue; first given in English, with an Apology for the Study of Northern Antiquities, being very useful toward the understanding our Ancient Poets and other Writers. By Elizabeth Elstob*.* This was the first

* Vide Note C.

Anglo-Saxon grammar written in *English*. Miss Elstob, a niece of Dr. Hickes', is also to be remembered as the translator of the Anglo-Saxon homily on the birthday of St. Gregory. This lady's Grammar of the "English-Saxon Tongue" is merely a compilation from the previous works of Dr. Hickes and Mr. Thwaites, and cannot lay claim to any great amount of originality with respect to the substance of the book; nor does it lay claim to any erudition beyond that possessed by the originals. And yet, in one respect, we deem it worthy of far higher honour than its predecessors. At a time when the majority of scholars slighted their mother tongue in favour of a corrupt Latin, Elizabeth Elstob, though herself a Latin scholar, put them to shame by her practical proof that pure English is better than scholastic Latin; and on this account, alone, we think hers the crowning production of the age.

We have now arrived at the era of the Georges; an era of comparative quiet. Already, we have watched the gradual decay of pure Anglo-Saxon after the Norman conquest; we have noted the ignorant indifference on this subject of the Norman clergy; we have traced the revival of Anglo-Saxon studies under Archbishop Parker and his successors, and have followed the advancement in Anglo-Saxon learning down to its most brilliant period, namely,

the commencement of the eighteenth century. But now a relapse takes place. The eighteenth century is as barren, as the previous century was prolific, in Saxonists. During this long period we find but few zealous students writing works "useful toward the understanding our Ancient Poets and other Writers." The study of Anglo-Saxon seems gradually to have sunk into comparative oblivion, until at length it was very generally regarded as unworthy to occupy the serious attention of the literate. It is true that the history of the country explains this neglect, but we cannot stay to examine this point. There are, however, a few notable exceptions to the above statement. In 1721 Wilkins published his edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Laws*. King Alfred's translation of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, together with the original, appeared in 1722, edited by John Smith, Canon of Durham. The Latin text of this edition is based upon that of the Jesuit Chifflet, but it is superior in every respect to any that had hitherto appeared. This by the way. The Anglo-Saxon translation of the Venerable Beda's work, as the reader will have remarked, had already been brought out by Wheloc in 1644. But the name of greatest note in connection with the eighteenth century is that of Edward Lye. The valuable grammar prefixed to his edition of the *Etymologicum Anglicanum* of Junius, and still

more, the great *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* of Lye and Manning, published in 1752, evince the former's acquaintance with, and critical knowledge of, the Anglo-Saxon language.

In 1773 appeared, for the first time, King Alfred's translation of *Orosius*, edited by Daines Barrington, the least creditably executed work that had, up to this period, been given to the public.

One event connected with this subject, perhaps the most important of this age, was the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon professorship at Oxford in 1750. The statute creating this professorship did not come into effect till the year 1795, but when once in force the establishment of this chair may be regarded as one of the chief causes which led to the revival of Anglo-Saxon studies in the present century.

But there were other and more immediate causes which we have now to notice. In Wanley's *Catalogue of Saxon Manuscripts*, which formed part of the *Thesaurus* of Dr. Hickes, we find the earliest notice we possess of that grand old Anglo-Saxon epic, the *Beowulf*. Notwithstanding this notice, in which he calls it "*Tractatus nobilissimus poeticè scriptus*," its very existence seems to have been ignored by Anglo-Saxon scholars until Mr. Sharon Turner, at the beginning of the present century, gave some extracts from it in his *History of the Anglo-*

Saxons. Even after the publication of his work, this poem excited little or no interest, and it was not until the year 1815, more than a hundred years after the publication of Wanley's *Catalogue*, that an edition of the entire poem was given to the world by Dr. Thorkelin, a foreigner. At the latter end of the eighteenth century, this celebrated Danish antiquary visited England, and, while there, made a transcript of the *Beowulf* from the only known, existing manuscript in the British Museum. Upon his return to Denmark, he wrote a Latin translation and commentary, and the whole work was finished and ready for publication in 1807; but during the bombardment of Copenhagen the antiquary's house was destroyed, and with it the manuscript results of thirty years' incessant labour. Assisted and encouraged by the Count of Sanderumgaard, Thorkelin, then a septuagenarian, returned to England, and made a second transcript of the poem, which, together with a fresh Latin translation, was published in 1815 under the following title: *De Danorum Rebus gestis Secul. iii. et iv. Poema Danicum Dialecto Anglo-Saxonica. Ex Bibl. Cotton. Musæi. Britan. edidit, Versione Lat. et Indicibus auxit Grim. Johnson Thorkelin, Dr., etc.*

In the year 1817 Erasmus Rask published, at Stockholm, his *Angelsaksisk Sproglaere*, or Anglo-Saxon Grammar, which, for advanced philological

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treatment of the subject, correctness of detail, and accuracy of the opinions expressed, cannot be too highly praised. In 1830 Mr. Thorpe translated this work into English, and thus conferred a boon upon the Anglo-Saxon student that can never be adequately acknowledged.

Thorkelin's edition of the *Bedwulf*, together with Rask's *Saxon Grammar*, may be regarded as the immediate causes of the revival of the interest in Anglo-Saxon studies which characterises the present century. We acknowledge, though not without shame, that this second revival of Anglo-Saxon learning is due to the genius of foreigners; still, we can turn proudly to the names of Parker and Cotton, Thorpe and Kemble, Conybeare and Ingram, Bosworth and Wright, to show that the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons have awakened to the fact that the language and literature of their ancestors is worthy of the attention of scholars, and that they will not allow other nations, although kindred, to carry off the palm in this particular.

Simply to enumerate the works upon every branch of the subject which have appeared during the past fifty years would tax the reader's patience to too great an extent, even if our space permitted. One fact is clear. A revival of Anglo-Saxon learning has taken place, and this in so thorough a manner that

we venture to predict it will not suffer another relapse. As the revival of classical learning in the fifteenth century has resulted in a masterly investigation of the history, the laws, the politics, and the social institutions of Greece and Rome, not to mention the accurate scholarship of the day which has produced these results, so, we believe, the time is not very far distant when there will arise many a fine Anglo-Saxonist to carry on the work begun by Turner, Thorpe, and Kemble, until at length every branch of the literature of Anglo-Saxon England will be understood as thoroughly as are those of ancient Greece and Rome.

CHAPTER I.

Advantages of the Study of Anglo-Saxon.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been accomplished during the past fifty years, especially in England and Germany, to facilitate and popularise the study of Anglo-Saxon, it is, nevertheless, a fact that, even at the present day, the subject has not the same fascination to the majority of students, (and we refer especially to University men,) as the study of the Classics, or even as the study of modern European languages; while by the masses of ordinarily well-educated people it is but too often regarded as a mere *virtuoso* affair, worthy only to amuse the idler hours of the antiquary.

We do not contend that a thorough knowledge of Anglo-Saxon literature is indispensable if one would attain to eminence in Letters, at the Bar, in the Senate, or in the Church; but we do hold that the advantages of the study to those who speak the English tongue can hardly be overrated.

The Anglo-Saxon literature, considering the state of civilisation to which Europe had attained at the time when it appeared, will bear comparison with any literature of the same age, and with a great deal that has appeared in later times. We must not compare it with the classic literature of Greece and Rome, which was produced after these nations had reached maturity and were in the very zenith of their intellectual greatness. This literature corresponds more exactly with the writings of that brilliant period in England, the dawn of which illumined the later years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the full splendour of which is felt even at the present day. The Anglo-Saxon literature, though far from being so highly polished or showing so high a degree of intellectual culture as this, yet has charms of its own of a very marked character.

It is undeniable that it possesses intrinsic merit of a high order, and is therefore capable of affording pleasure to those who can look beneath the antique style, and seize upon the poetic and other treasures which lie embedded in the obsolete language and verse-systems of a by-gone age.

One fact concerning the writings of the Anglo-Saxon period does not seem to be generally appreciated, namely, that judging from the extant relics,

which have already been discovered, they must originally have extended over a very wide field. They show the class of poetry that gave pleasure to the warrior in the Mead-hall, to the family in the *ton*, and to the *religious* in the monastery; they bring to light the quaint catechetical system of education generally adopted in the monastic schools, and disclose the extent of the scientific attainments of the *litterati* of that day; and they comprise historic documents of high value, though but too frequently coloured by clerical bias or monastic prejudice. There are charters which explain many a point and unravel many a difficulty in constitutional history; there are codes of laws, civil and ecclesiastical, that, in many instances, show the basis of our modern canon and common law; there are Anglo-Saxon translations of the Gospels, the Psalter and other parts of the Holy Scriptures; there are renderings of the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ave Maria and of other parts of the Anglican service books; and finally, there are treatises on theology, and writings on philosophy, besides manuals of piety, and homilies of illustrious prelates. These works, considered simply as relics of an important past, might well excite curiosity, apart from their value to the *littérateur*, the historian, the divine, the lawyer and the general student, for the simple

reason, before expressed, that they are works of intrinsic merit.

Among the poetry of the Mead-hall, the Saxons possessed, at least, one remarkable epic poem, a Christianised-pagan epic, or narrative of single-handed warfare, where "love is never introduced as a motive of action or intrigue as an instrument"; a graphic picture of early Anglian warrior life, commemorating noble deeds. We refer to the *Beowulf*. This grand relic of the heroic age in England, possesses especial claims upon the attention of the English-speaking nations, not only as being the first vernacular outburst of English song which has come down to us, but as opening up many a curious point, and shedding a new lustre on many modern peculiarities of language, character and customs, which otherwise might seem inexplicable. This monument, moreover, of the language and poetry of our ancestors is one of which any nation might well be proud. It is the oldest epic poem of which mediæval Europe can boast. It antedates the *Nibelungen-Lied*, the oldest epic of Germany, by several hundred years; and there is nothing in the early literature, whether of Scandinavia or of Germany, which can for a moment compare with this English poem, whether it be in power of imagination, in skill of construction, or in weirdness of detail.

A short analysis of this epic poem will show, in a very distinct light, the leading features of Anglo-Saxon *secular* poetry; and, taken in connection with the fuller analysis of Cædmon's *sacred* verse, which we shall give later on, will show the justness of our estimate that Anglo-Saxon literature possesses genuine, intrinsic merits.

We must ask the reader to imagine the interior of an Anglo-Saxon Mead-hall* in the winter's evening, when the log fires are blazing on the hearths in the centre aisle, and the dais is occupied by the King and his *cwén* and the gleeman of noble rank; when the long tables are lined with warriors who drink their mead, and are eager to hear the exciting tale that the *scop* is about to recite to the notes of the harp. As the minstrel rises from his stool, the din of laughter and talking is hushed, and every eye is turned to the dais, as the gleeman, striking a chord on his glee-beam, begins his recital:

“Hark! we have learnt a tale of other years,
Of kings and warrior Danes, a wondrous tale,
How æthelings bore them in the brunt of war.”

The tale then begins with the reign of Hróthgár who was King of the Danes in the North of England, at the supposed era of the narrative; and the poet

* *Vide* Note D.

sings of that monarch's kingly ancestors, of their heroic deeds, of his palace at Hart, and, finally, of a Mead-hall which Hróthgár had built, unsurpassed in size and beauty, by any that had ever been reared on English soil. The fame of this Hall is sounded far and wide. Men come from afar to see it and to witness the munificence of the King, who, with lavish hand, is known to deal out bracelet and ring and gold from the sacred "gift-stool." Here, as each night comes round, King and thanes are wont to meet, and

. . . "oft uprose,
Loud ringing through those bowers, the harp's glad
voice ;
And oft the bard, whose memory's treasured store
Was of the days and generations past,
Waked the sweet song."

Year after year passes by, and naught occurs to disturb their happiness. The prowess of the Danish thanes guards their land from conquest, their palace and their Hall from plunder, and it seems as if their happiness is destined to be unending. But at length, their joy is turned to sadness. A terrible fiend appears, who wreaks on this happy band his dire and savage vengeance. This evil and mysterious enemy is the Grendel, one of a progeny of misshapen giants who had long warred against both

God and man. This fiend, it seems, roamed the marshes in the lonely night, and held, as his domain, the fen-land, rocky fastness and dark morass. His stature was enormous; his strength far more than human; his flesh invulnerable to all weapons of earthly mould; and on his fingers were "hand-spurs," more like to steel than human nails.

This fiend hears, day after day, from his dark abode, the joyous revelry of the Danes. He frowns in anger, and resolves that they shall be his prey. Erelong, under the earth-covering of Night, he stalks over the moors till he comes to Hróthgár's Mead-hall. There being none to oppose his advance, he enters the building unheeded, and, as he treads its chequered floor, he sees, by the light of the smouldering fires, that company of æthelings asleep on their benches. Grim and greedy, he soon is ready; rugged and ruthless, he seizes in their sleep thirty of the noblest thanes, and, before ever a warning can be given, he is gone with their slaughtered bodies, back to his cavern home.

In the morning, a cry is raised that thirty thanes have been slaughtered, and the warriors sit in sadness when they behold, along the paths leading to the Grendel's den, the blood-traces of the accursed foe. Scarcely is there one of that noble band but has lost some one of his kin.

After the space of one night the Grendel comes again. The band of æthelings who are on duty guarding that best of houses first feel the force of his murderous hand-grip. Then, a second time, he enters Hertha in stealth, and a second time accomplishes his mission of blood.

Night after night does this grim eoten visit the Mead-hall, and each time some fresh gap is made in the Danish band, and no force avails against his murderous assaults. So Grendel rules, and as often as the darkness comes, he wars against Hróthgár,—alone against all;—till at length the festive Hall stands empty, since none dares to battle with the unearthly foe and meet a certain death.

Twelve winters' tide was his rage endured, and it became known far and near, in sad songs, that Grendel waged unholy war against Hróthgár, and that no money-compromise could appease his savage rage. In perpetual night he held the misty moors, and Hertha, he occupied with its rich stalls; but the "gift-stool," alone, he might not so much as touch.

In spirit broken, Hróthgár sat many a time in his palace; many a time he sat on the sea-shore wrapped in saddest thought.

During these twelve long years, the "sad songs" relating to the Grendel's depredations had been sung

in every *ton* and hall and round-tower of England, till at length, they had reached the ears of Higélác, king of the Weder-Geáts, or Angles. Here Beówulf lived, a thane of Higélác's court, and strongest of the sons of men. No sooner had the dire tidings reached him, than he vows to be avenged upon the Grendel. He bids his men make ready a ring-prowed ship, and determines to go "o'er the seabird's path" * to seek the monarch, Hróthgár, in his hour of need. He chooses thrice five bold warriors as his companions, men dauntless in fight, and who know every landmark on the beaten coast. Soon the ship is ready; her deep hold is filled with arms; they leave the shore; and erelong, by the sea-girt cliffs, "e'en as a bird," the boat cuts through the waves that foam around her prow. Before the second sun had set, these warriors reach the coast of Hróthgár's realm, and as they near the land they don their glittering mail. The warden of the coast had already espied their ship, and as soon as they had landed, and he had learned the object of their coming, leads them an inland walk of two miles to Hróthgár's palace, where they are forthwith ushered into the presence of the King. Then Beówulf speaks in the self-confident, self-laudatory tones of a true Homeric hero:

* *Vide* Note E.

“ ‘ King Hróthgár, hail !

I am the thane and kin of Higelác ;
One that have master'd in my day of youth
Full many a deed of gallant enterprise.
And now in mine own country have I heard
Bruited by loud report this Grendel's wrong :
For gleemen told, that, soon as evening's light
Beneath Heaven's vault sought its deep hiding-place,
Thy princely bower all emptied of its guests
Stood tenantless. Then this valiant band and brave,
Counsell'd that I should seek thee at thy need ;
For they best knew my prowess, they had seen
What time I came deep dyed in hostile gore
From dread and perilous war ; then in one night
With hardy grasp I quell'd five savage Jutes,
And plunged them howling in the ocean wave.
And now with Grendel, with that guilty one,
Fiend though he be, alone will I assay
The mortal strife.

“ ‘ I have heard

That that foul miscreant's dark and stubborn flesh
Recks not the force of arms :—such I forswear,
Nor sword nor burnish'd shield of ample round
Ask for the war ; all weaponless, hand to hand

Beówulf will grapple with this nightly foe.
There, as Heaven's righteous judgment shall award,
One of us falls.' ”

While Beówulf is speaking, the aged monarch
gazes admiringly on the young warrior, and his eyes
seem to be rivetted on the bright coat of mail, “ the

war-net sewed by the skill of the armourer," which Beówulf wears. The King thanks him for his brave offer, but cannot refrain from telling him of the danger of the adventure which he has undertaken.

As evening approaches, Hróthgár and Beówulf repair to the Mead-hall, and once more, after many a long year, the fires on the hearths are kindled. The monarch ascends the "gift-stool." His queen, the beautiful Wealhtheów, sits at his side. His noble "hearth-sharers" gather around him. The minstrel strikes his "glee-beam." The war-men throng the benches. The bright armour once again glistens in the flicker of the log fires. The vats labour under their burden of mead. Hertha as of old resounds with merriment and song; there is laughter of men; the din redoubles and words are winsome!

Wealhtheów, Hróthgár's queen, the gold adorned one, greets the warriors in the Mead-hall, and the buxom wife first gives the cup to her lord and bids him be blithe at the feast. Then, on every side the bracelet covered queen hands rich vessels, until she bears the mead-cup to Beówulf. She greets the Angles' lord, thanking God that the will had befallen her to trust in any warrior for help. He, the fierce war-man, drinks of the cup from Wealhtheów, and then, eager for battle, Beówulf speaks:

"I resolved, cwén, when on the main I went, that

I alone would work your people's will or bow in death, fast in hostile grasps. I shall do deeds of noble valour or await my last day in this Mead-hall."

Wealhtheow liked the hero's proud speeches. Adorned with gold, went the joyful people's queen to sit by her lord until Hróthgár went to his evening rest. But he, the hoary monarch, well knew that in that high Hall there would be battle when murky night, the shadow-covering of creatures, came advancing dusky under the clouds.

When the evening's feast is over, the guests all arise. Hróthgár bids Beowulf hail, gives him command of the Mead-hall and adds, "Never before, since I could raise hand and shield, have I entrusted to any man the Danes' festive Hall, save now to thee, Beowulf. Have now and hold this best of houses ; show thy mighty valour ; watch against foes !"

Hróthgár then departs, but before he retires, he sets a band of æthelings to watch, and to give warning when the huge eoten is seen advancing. Beowulf, left alone with his companions, doffs his iron suit, gives his helm and rich sword to an attendant, and then retires to rest. Not a word is spoken by the warriors, as each one knows full well that many a thane, in that same hall, in days gone by, has met a horrid death. It is the silence which precedes the battle.

Before many hours have passed, there comes, stalking in the murky night, the shadow-walker. All of the Anglian warriors, appointed to defend that best of houses, are asleep; all of the Gothic band are deep in slumber;—all, save Beówulf. He, watching for the foe, in hate and angry mood, awaits the battle meeting. The fires smoulder on the hearths and the Hall is dark and cold. At length,

“ . . . beneath the hill of mists
The Grendel came—a heaven-abandon’d wretch ;—
The foul assassin thought in that high hall
To gorge some human prey. Onwards he pass’d
In darkness, till right near he might behold
That princely bower, the nobles’ golden seat
Rich deck’d with many a mead-cup. . . . Soon he
reach’d,—

A joyless guest, that hall ; soon, unopposed,
With giant arm, fierce in his wrath, dash’d down
Her iron-banded gates ; and now he trod
Her chequer’d floor, angry of soul he moved,
A fiendish foe ; and flamelike, as he strode,
Shot from his eyes a sad and hideous light.
There might he see the heroes at their rest—
A band of brothers. Then his heart was glad,
For sooth he thought, or ere the morrow dawn’d,
From each man’s corpse to drain the blood of life.

“ . . . Firm of soul meanwhile
The thane of Higelác watch’d, full fain to prove
How that foul fiend would fare beneath his grasp.

Nor long delay the murderer brook'd ; for still
In other days light effort had it cost
To slay the uncautious warrior in his sleep,
To crush the yielding bones, and from each vein
Draw the warm current.

“ Now strode he onward, and with slaughterous hand
Pounced on the wary chief. He swift uprose
(Nor reckless of his aim nor weak of grasp)
And dash'd to that fair floor th' astounded foe.
Soon found that base one, that in the elder time
(Since first he roam'd the waste) he ne'er had coped
With sterner soul or hand of hardier grasp.
Care was upon his heart and sudden dread ;
Fain would he seek his own unhallow'd den,
And shroud himself in darkness, for he met
Such welcome as of old he wist not there.
Nor less bethought him of his evening pledge
The gallant thane of Higelác ; firm he stood,
And seized the monster. Yet he might not triumph,
His hold was loosen'd, and the fiend was free.
Swift rush'd the hero forwards, all his care
Lest the dark murderer scape, and wing his flight
To fen and fastness. Soon the Grendel felt
Beneath that grasp of power, that he had bent
In evil time his steps to Hróthgár's home.
Loud was the din, and fierce the champion's rage,
And keen the struggle.”

The companions of Beówulf, fearing that their lord
is being overmatched, draw their swords and smite
on every side. They know not that no war-blade

will cut into the fiend's flesh. Vain are their efforts. But Beówulf, stout of soul, has this foe of God in his mighty hand-grasp, and,

“Soon the dark wanderer's ample shoulder bore
A gaping wound ; each starting sinew crack'd,
And from its socket loosed the strong-knit joint.—
The victory was with Beówulf ; and the foe,
Howling and sick at heart fled as he might,
To seek beneath the mountain shroud of mist
His joyless home ; for well he knew the day
Of death was on him, and his doom was seal'd.”

In the morning, warriors come from far and near to see the marvel. The Grendel had left his track as he fled, death-haunted and weary, to the Nicker's mere. There, near by, was to be seen the surge boiling with blood ; for the miscreant had dyed it after he had laid down his life in shelter of the fen. The Mead-hall, too, bore many a mark of the great night-battle. The stalls, resplendent with gold, and the couches, cunningly wrought, were upturned from their foundations where the wrestlers had borne them in their angry mood. The rich curtains that adorned the walls were rent ; the chequered floor was broken ; the tables were shattered ; and every part was in wreck, save only the roof and heavy pillars. Then the King steps forth ; and the queen, as soon as it is light, together with her lord, measures the meadow-

path encircled by her maidens. The warriors are merry, and run their fallow steeds in the race. The gleeman sings of the Goth's great deed, and Beówulf's praise is heard on every side.

Then is Hertha ordered to be adorned anew. The golden webs, (the embroidered hangings), shine once again on the walls, full of wondrous sights. The arm of the eoten with its hand, and "handspurs as of steel," is hung conspicuously forth as a trophy. The largest and noblest throng that had ever gathered in Hertha now fills the Hall. The mead-cup is borne around, and the King presents Beówulf with a helmet, decked with a wild boar's head in gold, a shield and coat of mail, and steeds such as the King himself used in the play of swords.

When the evening is come, the Hall again rings with the merriment of the warriors, and not till Hróthgár and Beówulf leave for the palace, does the revelry cease. Then, as of old, a guard is placed to watch the building; the war-men bow to sleep, and the bright shields hang glittering over their heads.

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But in the dead of night, while all are asleep, there comes over that blood-stained mere, and stealing beneath the shade of mist and mountain fastness, the huge form of a second fell monster. This eoten does not bear the likeness of a man. It is *she*, the weird

being who gave Grendel birth ; she, who inhabits the cold streams and hollow pools and watery caverns. Her eyes are wild, and, as she advances, a strange unearthly fire darts forth from them, shooting from place to place, as, with unsteady step and fitful bound, she takes her sorrowful journey, direfully to avenge her son. The Hall is shrouded in darkness ; but only too well does she know the way thither. At length she reaches Hertha. The Danes, without and within the Hall, unheeding of danger, are asleep ; yet it is a restless sleep. It is as if a night Mara, with her horrid visions, were upon them. The She-wulf rushes, unopposed, into the festive Hall ; but her unearthly step arouses the warriors, and in a moment, many a broad shield flashes in the light of the dying fires, and swords are drawn. But she, the Grendel's mother, is in haste ; she is discovered ; she would save herself. In an instant she seizes one of the nobles, Hróthgár's dearest thane, and before her hasty flight can be stopped she is off, and speeding her way over the cloud-enwreathed moor. Then is a cry raised in Hertha ; the Danish men are aroused, and the hoary King is of angry mood when he learns that his dearest thane is dead. Beówulf is quickly summoned to the presence-chamber. Then speaks the King, the helm of the Danes : " Fresh sorrow is upon us, Beówulf ; he is dead whose arm has long

upheld my realm. For that thou killedst Grendel yesternight, there is come another fell destroyer who has avenged her son. I have heard my people say that they have seen two such huge marsh-walkers, one in woman's likeness the other the Grendel." This

" . . . foul spirit, howling as the wolves,
Holds, by the perilous passage of the fen,
Rude crag, and trackless steep, her dark abode.
There from the headlong cliff rolls arrowy down
The fiery stream, whose wild and wondrous waves
The frequent and fast-rooted wood o'erhangs,
Shrouding them e'en as with the warrior's helm.
There nightly mayst thou see a sight of dread,
A flood of living flame."

Her home is no holy place, continues Hróthgár. Its depth is such there liveth no man so wise who knows its lowest caves. Evermore there rise up from its depths dark storms, and the wind stirs hateful tempests, until the air grows gloomy and the heavens shed tears.

Beówulf, undaunted by the horrors of the place, undertakes to track the fiend to her home.

" ' Here I swear,' he exclaims,
' She finds not refuge, nor in earth's deep caves,
Nor in the forest's shades, nor in the abyss
Of warring waters. Fly she where she will,
I vow revenge and pledge me to thy cause.' "

At these welcome words the aged monarch steps from his throne, and with joy embraces Beówulf, commands his steed to be immediately harnessed, and, with a chosen band prepares to escort Beówulf over the murky moor to the Grendel's home. The warriors accordingly start, and, led by four trusty guides, thread their way thither by cliff and cavern, the dwelling of many a monster of the flood. At length, they come to a halt, where, beneath the dark shade of a far overhanging rock, the angry and bloodstained stream rolls swiftly past. There, on the naked brow of a crag across the stream, they see the mangled head of Hróthgár's thane. Hróthgár turns away, sick at heart; but Beówulf burns with a keener desire than ever for the approaching battle, and forthwith prepares to plunge into the flood in quest of the fiend, the She-wulf. His companions, accordingly, help him as he dons his armour: first, his bright helmet with its wondrous charm "the head of the savage boar;" then his coat of mail; and lastly his famous sword "Hrunt-ing," the blade of which, steeped in herbs of strange and magic virtue, has never failed him. As soon as he is duly equipped, he turns to Hróthgár, and, in case of a fatal termination of the adventure, commends to his care the band of faithful warriors who have accompanied him on the expedition. This

done, and without awaiting the King's reply, he plunges into the whelming surge.

For the space of a whole day he sinks through the waters, and at length strikes the rocky ground. In a moment, she, who had held the sovereignty of the flood for a hundred years, sees a man from above, exploring, springs upon him, and seizes the warrior in her horrid clutches; but although, at first, he is powerless to fight, yet she cannot break his ring-mail with her fingers, but fiercely drags him down towards her dwelling at the bottom of the flood. By this time Beówulf has sufficiently recovered his senses to notice his surroundings. He finds himself in a roofed hall where there is no water; a region, where "the fire-flood shed its deep and livid glare." Breaking loose from the iron grasp of his antagonist, Beówulf strikes blow after blow upon the misshapen fiend with his magic sword; but that blade, which had never failed him in battle, avails not against the unearthly flesh of the She-wulf. The angry fighter casts the weapon away, and resolves to rely solely upon his strength of hand. A terrible encounter ensues; she seizes him by the shoulder; he breaks away; she catches him with fierce grasps; throws him weary to the ground; presses him down, and draws her seax ready to avenge her son. But Beówulf's armour protects

him. By a mighty effort he loosens her hold, and, seeing in that subaqueous realm, a sword of wondrous power, he springs away, seizes it, and deals such quick and terrible blows that at length the "bone-rings" of her neck break; the sword goes through her flesh, and she falls lifeless to the ground.

And now a marvellous sight presents itself. Instant, as though Heaven's glorious torch had suddenly shone, light is upon the gloom; a light that spreads itself throughout the inmost caverns of the eoten's stronghold and illumines its darkest recesses. Still grasping the mighty sword with which he had just killed the She-wulf, Beówulf wanders through this enchanted region, wondering at the sights and treasures which he sees, ready for any encounter that may await him, and eager to put an end to the Grendel should he still be alive. In one of the rocky chambers of this watery fastness, however, he finds the huge eoten lying dead. Wishing to present to Hróthgár some memorial of his victory, he proceeds to strike off the head of the Grendel. And now a second miracle ensues. At the first stroke of his sword the body springs far away from the head as the sword severs the two; and stranger yet, the steel of the sword melts away like ice as the giant's blood drips from it, leaving in Beówulf's hand naught but the rich sword-hilt. The warrior

takes none of the treasures which surround him, but bearing in one hand the Grendel's head and the head of the She-wulf, and in the other the rich sword-hilt with its mystic runes, he prepares to return to his companions.

Hróthgár and his warriors, after Beówulf had plunged into the flood, stay at the water's edge to watch the issue of the adventure; but when, at length, they see the crimson blood rise to the surface, and the waters turned to a flood of fire, their courage fails them; and fearing that Beówulf is slain, they depart, sick of mood, and bend their steps back to the Mead-hall.

The gallant band, however, who had followed their leader, Beówulf, still lingered on the strand. They had gazed long and eagerly, only to be disappointed, when all at once they see their Chief rise to the surface of the mere, and come swimming to land. No sooner is he safely landed than they help to loosen his helmet and coat of mail, and as they do so, the blood stained water, dripping from his person, dyes the very ground on which he stands.

Then a procession is formed. Four strong men can scarcely bear upon the deadly stake the heads of the conquered eotens. At length the heroes of the adventure reach the Mead-hall where the Danish warriors are drinking, but there is no sound of

revelry. The harp is silent, and no merriment is to be heard. As they enter the Hall, however, a sudden shout of triumph and welcome resounds through the building. Beówulf advances to the "gift-stool;" displays his hideous trophies; recounts his adventures; and ends by presenting to Hróthgár the golden hilt, with its runic inscription, which he has brought from the Grendel's den. The King, in reply, indulges in a speech marked by true Nestorian eloquence, acknowledging that Beówulf has redeemed his haughty pledge to free the country of its superhuman pest. Then the old monarch, with royal munificence, deals from that "gift-stool" the richest rewards in his power; the feast begins anew; the gleeman improvises a lyric in honour of the hero; the Mead-hall re-echoes the deep laugh and unbri-dled shouting of the warriors, and naught is heard but the exultant cry, "Hertha is ransomed."

The helm of Night grows murky; the aged Hróthgár goes to his couch, and Beówulf is eager for rest.

When the black raven, blithe of heart, announces the coming of the light on the following morning, the heroes of this adventure resolve to return to their own land. Accompanied by the entire warrior band they leave Hertha, and bend their steps to the shore. The warden espies them coming,—a gallant band in sarks of netted mail,—and has their ship

in readiness, which it seems by the King's command has been

“laden deep

With warlike gear, steeds, arms, and treasured gold,
The choicest meed of Hróthgár's ample store.”

It is a brilliant sight that now presents itself on that Danish shore. There, stands the hoary monarch, resplendent in his kingly arms, first in age as well as in rank. Beside him, stands Beówulf, a mere youth compared with the Danish King, his face flushed with conscious pride; and around them, stands that picked band of warrior-thanes, each one eager to do honour to the hero of the hour. The trusty warden draws near to inform the Anglian men that their ship is ready, when Beówulf advances and presents him with a jewelled sword in token of his esteem. The men embark; the King kisses Beówulf, that best of warriors, and, as he bids him “God speed,” he clasps him around the neck, his war-beaten face moistened with salt tears.

Soon the boat, harnessed for the sea, speeds through the waves, and, at length, the men see in the distance their native cliffs,—the well-known headlands of the Anglian coast. The torch of the world is shining when Beówulf reaches the Hall of his monarch Higelác. Immediately, a feast is prepared and

the Anglian men, bursting with curiosity, urge Beówulf to relate how it befell him on the way.

We may say, in passing, that the story of Beówulf does not end at this point. The remainder of the narrative, as it has come down to us in the Cottonian manuscript, describes the further adventures of the hero in his own land after the slaying of the Grendel; but this continuation of the legend, which is virtually an independent tale, and but slightly connected with the adventure of the Grendel, is in all probability the *residuum* of a much longer narrative, and *may* have formed, at one time, part of an extensive cyclus. We have adduced enough, however, to show the character of Anglo-Saxon secular poetry, and to prove how valuable an insight such a poem as this may give of certain phases of the social and warrior life of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

But the advantages of a study of Anglo-Saxon writings are not confined solely to the pleasure which we derive from a perusal of the poetry which they contain.

In the province of *language*, the pre-eminent advantage that an Anglo-Saxon scholar possesses over the scholar of modern English only, in a thorough understanding of the structure and resources of the language, is unquestionable. The many apparent anomalies of pronunciation, of spelling, and of struc-

ture, with which modern English abounds, can, in the majority of cases, be fully accounted for by referring back to the language in its pre-Norman stage.

The student of English who has mastered Anglo-Saxon has reached the fountain head of the English language, and can give both the "*an sit*" and "*cur sit*" of its grammar. It is true that in the English, as, indeed, in all the languages of the so-called Aryan family, the process of "phonetic decay" has been at work, so that terminations, originally significant words, have, after the lapse of time, either disappeared altogether, or have undergone so great a change from the falling out of letters, as to require a lengthened study to enable the student to recognise them. It is not pretended that a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon will disclose the full form of English inflections of which, perhaps, only a single letter remains at the present day. This is the province of comparative grammar. But it will, at any rate, disclose what a given form was, or must have been, at a much earlier stage of the language, and will throw light upon many a point which would sorely puzzle him who is unable to refer to the Anglo-Saxon.

Unfortunately, the works from which most people acquire their early grammatical ideas are, as a rule, based on Latin models, and show, throughout, how little such writers have understood the nature and

structure of a Teutonic language. Those who place themselves under the direction of these Latinised guides, necessarily acquire views which are not only imperfect, but unsound into the bargain. A thorough acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon prevents or counteracts the effect of these erroneous teachings. But it accomplishes more than this. It has been well said, that to know the grammar of a language it is necessary to know the reasons of the grammar. It is not sufficient to know simply the forms of words; we ought to know why such forms exist, and why in their place we do not find some other forms; and this canon of the science of Language is one of universal application.

What can be easier to the Saxonist than to explain why the form "I sang" is more correct than "I sung"; or why the est in "livest" becomes t in "wilt"; or why such a sentence as "Neuyr after she coude be blythe," the form "coude" is more correct than the modern form "could"; or why, in the phrase "if any man say aught to you, ye shall say," the form "you" is used in one instance and "ye" in the other; or why we find "yes" in one place and "yea" in another; or "no" in one place and "nay" in another; or to explain the structure of such a phrase as "all the more"; or finally to explain why, in the universal use of the pronoun

“it,” educated Englishmen and Americans alike are as thoroughly “Cockney,” from an etymological standpoint, as the veriest ignoramus born within hearing of Bow-church Bell?

It is the same in matters of *pronunciation*. Most of the peculiarities of modern English speech in this respect, which at first seem to court the criticism of those who are not of English birth, belong legitimately to the English nation as heirlooms of its Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and can be shown to be correct on strict philological lines.

At times too, a modern word, traced back to the Anglo-Saxon, will throw a perfectly electric light upon a point of language or of history or of national character. We call a sullen, dogged, obstinate boor a “churl.” Whence this epithet? In Saxon times, the thanes, the ceorls, and the théows formed the three classes of society, corresponding to the nobility, the yeomanry, and the domestic slaves of a later age. The ceorl or yeoman was the ancestor of that sturdy race of freemen which has grown into the powerful “middle class” of our own day; the lineal ancestors of the men who, from the time of King John to the present hour, have fought the great battle for civil liberty, till to-day they form the bone and sinew of England and, in spite of the clamour of the demagogue, are more truly the “ruling classes”

than the mightiest peers of the realm. Such was the Saxon ceorl or churl. How, then, has this word of true nobility become degraded from its high meaning? The history of the Norman period in England supplies the true answer. The haughty barons, holding their lands, however small, by military tenure, looked down upon and despised, as beneath contempt, these sturdy Saxon tillers of the soil, and treated them as low-born. The ceorl, in turn, hated with bitter hatred the insolent foreigner whose iron arm was crushing him to the earth. Helpless, yet high-spirited, he repaid *hauteur* with blunt words and sullen looks, till the Norman, in deep disdain, exclaimed "Churl,"—and the word has lived.

Seclusiveness of character and love of privacy are often laid to the charge of those of Anglo-Saxon descent; and in England, where these characteristics are very distinctly marked, they are invariably attributed by foreigners to national vanity or personal affectation. The most elementary knowledge of Anglo-Saxon social life would show that the English come rightfully by this characteristic, and that it is no mark of mere pride or affectation, but was a characteristic of the whole of the Teutonic race, which did not escape the keen notice of Tacitus. Speaking of the Germans, before the Saxon invasion of England, this writer says: "They dwell in villages,

not according to our custom, formed of houses one adjoining the other, but each man surrounds his own home with an open space." And this seclusiveness of character the Saxons carried with them to Britain. Anyone who has travelled in England must have noticed that it is pre-eminently the land of hedges and enclosures,—

“ Little lines of sportive wood run wild ”

whereas, on the Continent, almost the first thing that one notices is the absence of the hedge-rows of England. If, now, we examine English local names, (one of the surest tests by which to arrive at the national characteristics of a by-gone age,) we shall find that for more than a thousand years England has been distinctively the land of hedges or enclosures. The termination *ton*, which so frequently occurs on both sides of the Atlantic, proves how eager every Anglo-Saxon was to possess some spot which he could call his own, and guard from the intrusion of his neighbour. The primary meaning of this suffix *ton** is an enclosure, or that which is bounded by a hedge; and originally signified the single homestead or farm which the owner or occupant desired to mark out as his *hdm* or home or sacred spot. This restricted meaning of the word *ton* or town was

* Anglo-Saxon *týnan* to enclose, hedge in, etc.

current even in the time of Wycliffe for he translates the passage in the Gospel according to St. Matthew c. xxii., v. 5 : " But thei dispisiden, and wenten oon to his *toun*, another to his marchaundise"; where the modern Anglican translation has, " They made light of it, and went one to his *farm*, and another to his merchandise." Even at the present day, there are single farm houses in England the names of which end in *ton*, still pointing to this Anglo-Saxon seclusiveness. In many cases, however, the isolated *ton* became the nucleus of a village, and the village grew into a town; and last stage of all, the word *ton* or town has come to signify, not the one small farm, enclosed from the forest by the Saxon settler, but the dwelling-place of a vast population greater than that of which the whole of Saxon England could boast. Still, though Botolph's *ton* has grown into Bo'ston, yet the love of seclusion and impatience of intrusiveness characteristic of the first settlers have descended as an heirloom to each inhabitant of the modern Boston, and, carried across the Atlantic, by the first Puritan settlers in this country, are to this day the characteristics of its American namesake.

In the study of the origin of national *social customs*, a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon literature often discloses points of especial interest. It is well known

that Anglo-Saxon notions of hospitality, though well intentioned, were inimical to sobriety. It was considered the duty of the host to offer mead or wine to every guest of distinction who might be journeying past his home. The kings and nobles, on their journeys of state or pleasure, stopped to drink at every house on their sparsely settled route; and as, at such times, they were exposed to the danger of assassination by secret foes, a system was introduced, the remembrance of which, has permeated the whole of our literature, and the vestiges of which remain in many of the pleasant amenities of the English social life of to-day.

Spenser, in the *Faerie Queene*, speaking of the mariner, says :

Soone as the port from far he has espide,
His chearfull whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups ; his mates
Him *pledg* around.

Similarly, Ben Jonson sings in his often quoted lines :

Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will *pledge* with mine.

Here the word "pledge," to a modern reader, would convey but a very small amount of meaning; but to the Anglo-Saxon student this word is full of signifi-

cance. When a Saxon warrior, travelling through the country, stopped to quench his thirst with a glass of mead at the nearest *ton* he might pass on his road, he was exposed to the danger of assassination by unsuspected enemies. The Saxon drinking-cups were large and horn-shaped, and required to be held in both hands. While the hands were thus in use, and the head raised in the act of drinking, a warrior offered a fine opportunity to the assassin. Hence a custom was introduced as a protection to life. A Saxon about to drink, asked his companion to be his *pledge*, or guardian, while so doing. The pledger, accordingly, drew his sword and protected the drinking man, who, in his turn, guarded his companion while he drank. When personal security became better ensured this practice died out, and the sword gave place to the various substitutes of modern times.

As an instance of the survival, in England, of this custom in the social usages of the present day, we may mention the passing of the "Loving Cup," which is observed at many of the more formal functions at the English Universities; and more particularly at the Lord Mayor's banquets at the Mansion House, where both the customs and dress of an earlier age are scrupulously maintained. At such entertainments, when the Loving Cup is passed

around, the ceremony brings vividly to mind the Anglo-Saxon custom of olden times. The guest whose turn it is to drink, rises from his seat, and receiving the Loving Cup in both hands from the guest on his left hand, turns to the guest on his right, who removes the massive lid; the guest on either side standing guard while he drinks the accustomed toast, in accordance with the traditions of an earlier age.

To the student of language, of literature, and of social observances, this study is all-important. But it has practical bearings as well. A strong and steady light may be reflected from this quarter on many points of municipal and common law; the theory of our political constitution; and the internal history of our Church polity. The Saxon charters and laws throw a strong light upon the Saxon political and religious institutions, and enable us to gain a tolerably clear insight into Saxon times. They show the rank, the rights, and the duties of the several orders of society; they disclose to us the mode in which our ancestors punished public wrongs or redressed civil injuries; they explain the constitution and jurisdiction of the several courts; they discover interesting facts respecting the tenure of land; and they show the amount of authority possessed by the Anglo-Saxon Church. The whole

fabric of our laws, indeed, ecclesiastical as well as civil, is built upon an Anglo-Saxon foundation. To the lawyer who is not content with simply the practical knowledge of modern law requisite for the every-day business of life, but who aspires to a thorough mastery of any particular branch of his profession, a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon law is as indispensable as a knowledge of Roman law. "Where," asks an eminent authority on this subject, "is the lawyer who will not derive an accession of solid information from a perusal of the Anglo-Saxon laws published by Lambard, Wheloc, and Wilkins, not to mention the various charters and legal instruments that are still extant, together with the ancient records of our county courts, on the foundation of which is erected the whole superstructure of our forensic practice? What patriot is there whose heart does not burn within him while he is reading the language in which the immortal Alfred, and other Saxon kings, composed the elements of our envied code of laws, and portrayed the grand outlines of our free constitution?" And yet how few even of our most prominent members of the Bar have ever read one line of these, although the contents of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* may be as familiar to them as Blackstone or Kent! The lawyer who possesses this intimate acquaintance with his subject

will not only have the personal satisfaction arising from a consciousness of superior knowledge, but will possess, in addition, a power of illustration and argument not attainable by the student whose attainments are confined to a knowledge of the principles of modern forensic practice only.

Moreover, our political institutions, which excite the admiration of all who have devoted attention to the subject, although they have been modified by Norman feudalism ; although they have been rendered more secure by baronial or popular opposition to royal tyranny or absolutism ; and although they have been improved and perfected by the wisdom of succeeding ages, still, even nowadays, are essentially Anglo-Saxon in all their main features. The originals of most of these institutions upon which the English race most prides itself at the present day, no less than the beginnings of many of the best principles of national constitutional government, and local self-government, to which both England and America owe so much of their greatness, are to be found in the charters and laws of the pre-Norman era. The statesman who has clearly before his mind the history of the grand constitutional principles of his country, and who can trace them back to a time when they existed only in germ, will have a broader view of the bearings of any attempt at

innovation or reform, and be better entitled to an opinion upon any important question of statesmanship, than those who are prevented by ignorance from casting their observation beyond the narrow circumference of their own age.

At the present day, too, when questions of Church discipline, Church doctrine, and Church practice are commanding the attention of intelligent men—the laity as well as the clergy—they who can turn to the religious writings of the Anglo-Saxons may gain from them an insight into the doctrine and polity of the early Anglican Church which those cannot possess who take the Tudor period as their starting point. And where is the clergyman who will not derive advantage from a perusal of the ecclesiastical laws, the ecclesiastical history, the homilies, and the various works of piety and devotion of Anglo-Saxon England, of which so many specimens are extant?

But, perhaps, the crowning advantage of a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon consists in the pleasure it affords the lover of English literature, by enabling him to enjoy the earlier, no less than the more modern, writings of England's greatest writers. Let the student, who has mastered the Anglo-Saxon stage of our language as it passes sluggishly through Saxon times, follow it through the so-called Semi-Saxon, as it begins in Layamon's *Brut* to break loose from

the trammels of grammatical forms ; let him watch it, as it bounds through the Norman times, throwing off in its progress first one incumbrance and then another, till gaining power by the very oppression it has endured at the hands of its Norman tyrants, it bursts forth in the literature of the Early English period, giving promise of its future greatness ; let him track it for a hundred years, as it changes its course, now tending to the Northern now to the Southern dialect, till, at length, in Middle English, it is powerful enough to express the highest flights of the genius of Chaucer ; let him still follow it, as, impatient of restraint, it carries away in its progress the remaining imperfections which hide its true strength, until finally it shows its majestic power in the works of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton ; then the student will have gained a correct notion not only of the gradually increasing power of the *language*, in its passage from a synthetic to an analytic structure, he will, further, have gained a view of the gradual unfolding of the *mind* of the English nation as reflected in the ever increasing brilliancy of the national literature, that can never be attained by one whose reading is restricted by a knowledge of modern English only.

CHAPTER II.

The Life and Times of Cædmon and Sketch of the Junian Manuscript.

THE earliest specimen which has come down to us of the English *metrical* Romance or Epic, carries us back, like the earliest specimen of the English *prose* Romance or Novel, to the very dawn of English life and history.

In tracing to its source the story of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, (and it is with this tale that English prose Romance begins), we have to retrace our steps and explore the dim past of bardic times when the Cambrian poets sang of the warlike deeds of kings and heroes in the death struggle then being waged between the Kelt and the Saxon.

And this, *cæteris paribus*, is equally true of the metrical Romance, whether secular or sacred; whether it be the Christianised-pagan romance of the *Beowulf* or the Scriptural romance of Cædmon's "Fall of Man." Both of these, take us back in thought to early Anglo-Saxon times, when England was dense

with forests, when the woods were filled with the wolf, the elk, and the bear, and when only here and there a solitary dwelling in the field or feld, *i. e.* the clearing, marked the habitation of human beings.

The little that we know of the life of Cædmon, and the strange story of the sudden revelation of high poetic powers possessed by this hitherto unknown ceorl, would be unintelligible should we fail to understand the social and ecclesiastical conditions of the times in which he lived.

It is difficult, no doubt, to reproduce in imagination, even approximately, the everyday life of an age long gone by and enter into the spirit of its daily thought; and yet this must be attempted if we would study intelligently the literature of any past epoch. The history, the religion, the language, and the social customs of any given age are mutually explanatory, and one and all, must be made subsidiary if the literature of the past is to stand out before the mind as a living picture.

In the short account of the life of Cædmon which has been handed down to us by the Venerable Beda in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and which unfortunately is the only one that we possess, there are references to certain phases of Anglo-Saxon life that we must glance at before going farther, in order to render intelligible Beda's narrative of this remarkable man.

The Anglo-Saxon *scop* or gleeman,—a profession corresponding to that of the bard of the Keltic era and to that of the minstrel in the Norman era,—was a kind of protean character. At times, he was the companion of king and courtiers, holding the rank of thane or nobleman ; an accomplished poet, entitled to a high seat in the king's hall and the proprietor of estates, whose presence was required at battles when the prizes of valour were to be awarded, and at court festivities to chant the heroic deeds of his patron or of his patron's guests. The king's *scop* or earl's gleeman, was the favourite of the court ; the one indispensable guest at every banquet and every courtly gathering ; whose skill with the glee-beam or harp spread joy throughout the festive hall, and whose memory was stored with soul-stirring tales of great deeds, the recital of which could not fail to fire the hearts and quicken the pulses of young and old alike. It was the duty of the court gleeman to know the genealogy of his patron, the traditions of his house, the past history of his race, and every fact or legend that could enhance his dignity or flatter his pride. After dinner, when there was " song and music together, and the glee-beam was touched," he was the chief centre of attraction. If the board was honoured by the presence of a distinguished guest it was his duty to be ready with

verses in his praise. This point is brought out very clearly in the story of Beówulf. On this hero's return to Hróthgár's court, after the conquest of the Grendel, the bard, "the King's thane, a man laden with lofty themes, thoughtful of song, he who a great multitude of old traditions remembered, who invented new ones fitly composed, this man now began Beówulf's adventure skilfully to relate." This function of the gleeman was styled "the right of bestowing praise," and earned for the *scop* a wide influence among a warlike and illiterate class of nobles.

But the gleeman was not always fortunate enough to be the retainer at a king's court, or the noble guest of the Mead-hall. At times, he appears as a wandering narrator of verse and tale, straying from *ton* to hamlet, from hall and monastery to cottage and ale-house; he was passionately beloved by the laity, high and low, rich and poor, and even by the lower orders of the clergy. These gleemen, were the story-tellers, the news gatherers, the scandal-mongers, and gossip-bearers, in times when there were neither newspapers nor post offices; the chief medium, from their vagrant mode of life, of hearing, bearing, and retailing the latest "domestic and foreign intelligence." Their profession procured them easy access to the camp, the ale house, and, occa-

sionally, even to the monastery. It is not probable that any but very lax abbots or abbesses would have sanctioned their performances in monasteries; yet in the middle of the eighth century we know from authentic records, that the *religious* were not averse to being amused by "the sportive arts of poets, musicians, harpers, and buffoons." If the gleemen were popular with the laity and lower orders of the clergy, they were the reverse with the bishops and higher ecclesiastics, who regarded them as children of the devil, mockers and vagabonds, and, indeed, thought no name too bad for them. They are rarely spoken of, in ecclesiastical chronicles, as *scops* or gleeman, but as "ale-poets," "tumblers," "jesters," "players," and "mimics."

The ale-house, however, was the place that the wandering gleeman most liked, and in which he was most appreciated. Here, he had to suit his entertainment to the vulgar taste of boors, utterly incompetent to enjoy anything beyond the most palpable and coarsest of fun :—"Media inter carmina poscunt aut ursam aut pugiles,"—something rougher than song and music.

But the Anglo-Saxons, like all of their *confrères* of the Teutonic race, were fond of music and song, and at their convivial gatherings, even when the gleeman was not present, it was customary to pass the glee-

beam, and for each guest in turn to do his share towards the entertainment of his fellows. This, which seems to have been a universal custom among the Anglo-Saxon ceorls at their feasts, is brought out very distinctly in Beda's account of the "Coming" of Cædmon as we shall subsequently see.

Another phase of Anglo-Saxon life, which it is most important to understand in this connection, is the monastic system then in vogue among the *religious*. It was the early days of Christianity in England, when the dogmas of the Church were held with the tenacity of a cloudless faith, and when the dazzling vista of the future life had lost none of its glamour under the disenchanting touch of rationalism. It was an age when the country was young and poetic; when kings and nobles thought to atone for the vices and blood-stains of a life-time by making large bequests to the Church; and when the faithful believed in the possibility of chastity and a pure heart. The religious and social conditions of the age rendered possible the existence of *double monasteries*, as they have been styled, *i. e.*, retreats for the *religious* of both sexes; and these establishments, not infrequently, were presided over by an abbess of royal or noble birth. The early English monastery was the centre of mission work, the centre of educational work, and the centre of all the medical and

relief work for miles around. Moreover, in these early days, when pilgrims on foot or on palfrey were constantly passing from one part of the country to another on their way to some famous shrine; or, when some regal or other party was making a "progression" through the country, it often happened that the monastery became the place of lodgment, (hotel, hospice, hospital), where travellers were always welcome, and entertained in good old Catholic style, with all the hospitality of the monastery. The double monastery was virtually a necessity of the age, and for many a long year was held in the highest estimation by our early Anglo-Saxon ancestors. The most distinguished of the Saxon female saints, and many of the most eminent prelates of that age, were educated in these establishments. The strictest precautions were enforced to keep the Sisters within the spacious precincts of their convent, and to prevent any man from entering within their enclosure, unless it were on some exceptional occasion; and then, only with the permission of the abbess, and in the presence of witnesses. Of this strict discipline, as it was observed at the double monastery at Wimborne, we have a minute account by a contemporary, Ralph of Fulda, in his life of St. Lioba, written in the beginning of the eighth century. He tell us: "There were two monasteries at Wim-

borne, formerly erected by the kings of the country, surrounded by strong and lofty walls, and endowed with competent revenues. Of these, one was designed for the clergy, the other for females; but neither, (for such was the law of their foundation), was ever entered by any person of the other sex. No woman could obtain permission to come into the monastery of the men; nor any of the men to come into the convent of the women, with the exception of the priests, who entered to celebrate Mass and withdrew the moment the service was over. If a female, desirous of quitting the world, asked to be admitted among the sisterhood, she could obtain her request, be she who she might, on this condition only, that she should never seek to go out, unless it were on some extraordinary occasion, which might seem to justify such indulgence. Even the abbess herself, if it were necessary that she should receive advice or give orders, spoke to men through a window; and so desirous was she to remove all opportunity of conversation between the Sisters and persons of the other sex, that she refused entrance into the convent, not only to laymen and clergymen, but even to the bishops themselves."

It is unquestionable that, at first, both clerics and nuns who had dedicated themselves solely to the service of God bore, as a rule, the highest reputa-

tion for chastity, self-denial, charity, and devotion; but in the course of time abuses crept in, and a system which, originally, was of the greatest service to the people at large, became later, the cause of gross scandal to the Church. The besetting sin of the Anglo-Saxon *men* was excessive drinking; although it is well to remember, in using this expression, that the common beverages of the Anglo-Saxon, the mead, the ale, and the wine were innocent compared with the strong alcoholic beverages of to-day. The besetting sin of the Anglo-Saxon *women* was, naturally, an excessive love of dress and admiration, and these national failings intruded themselves, at length, within the sacred enclosures of the monastery.

By the Council of Cloveshoe (747) all inmates of monasteries, both clerics and monks, were forbidden to drink to excess themselves, or to encourage such excess in others; they were to be content with sober cheer, and to exclude from their religious houses, delicate meats and coarse, unseemly amusements; to devote their cells to silence, study, and prayer, and never to allow them to become the resort of poets, gleemen, harpers, and buffoons, [*poetarum, citharistarum, musicorum, et scurrarum*]. With respect to convents of nuns, it was enacted that more attention should be paid to study and prayer, and less to the

wearing and embroidering of works of vanity ; and that the cells of the Sisters should be closed against lay society, superfluous visits, and private feasting. In short, they were forbidden to be *flammeæ puellæ* or women of fashion.

It is certain that the double monastery, even in its purest days, found but little favour with many of the Roman hierarchy. Pope Gregory, in one of his extant epistles, applauds Januarius for declining to establish a monastery for men adjoining a nunnery. Even some of the abbesses seem to have felt the grave responsibility which such an institution involved. The Abbess Eangyth, in the eighth century, writes to Wynfrith of the weighty care "*universarum commissarum animarum promiscui sexus et ætatis.*" The Venerable Beda in an extant letter to his friend and patron the Abbot Albinus, St. Aldhelm, and others, notable in the Anglo-Saxon Church, denounced in no measured terms, the wrongdoings of these double conventual establishments; until finally, at the second Council of Nicæa, [A.D. 787], the system was authoritatively condemned by a canon forbidding the creation of double monasteries and enjoining the suppression of those already in existence.*

The story of Cædmon's life, however, carries us

* *Vide* Note F.

back to the "double monastery" in its purest and best days, and presents a picture of the actual life of the *religious* of that time, as chaste and earnest and devout, as even pure fancy might have depicted it.

We do not propose to spoil the quaint, tender narrative of Bede, by attempting a synopsis of his account, but we shall give the story in full, as it has come down to us, making such changes only as may be necessary in translating the Latin original.

"In the year following, that is, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 680, the most devoted servant of Christ, Hilda, abbess of the monastery that is called Streoneshalh [Whitby], as we have before related, after having performed many heavenly works during her earthly life, passed thence, to receive the rewards of the life eternal, on the 17th of November, at the age of sixty-six years ; the first half of which she spent most nobly, living in the secular habit, and more nobly still, dedicated the remaining half to our Lord in the monastic life ; for she was nobly born, being the daughter of Herericus, nephew to King Edwin, together with which King, she also embraced the Faith and Sacraments of Christ at the preaching of Paulinus, of blessed memory, the first bishop of the Northumbrians, and kept the same

undefiled till she was worthy to attain to the Beatific Vision.

Resolving to quit the secular habit and to serve Him alone, she withdrew into the province of the East Angles, for she was allied to the King; being desirous to pass over from thence into France, to forsake her native country and all she had, and so live a stranger, for our Lord's sake, in the monastery of Cale, that she might with more ease attain to the eternal kingdom in heaven; because her sister Hersuid, mother to Aldwulf, king of the East Angles, at that time living in the same monastery under regular discipline, was waiting for her eternal reward. Being led by her example, she continued a whole year in the aforesaid province, with the design of going abroad; afterwards, Bishop Aidan, being recalled home, he gave her the land of one family on the north side of the river Wear; where for a year she also led the monastic life together with a few companions.

After this, she was made abbess of the monastery called Herutea, which monastery had been founded, not long before, by the devoted servant of Christ, Heiv, who is said to have been the first woman that, in the province of the Northumbrians, took upon her the life and habit of a nun, being consecrated by Bishop Aidan; but she, soon after she had founded

that monastery, went away to the city of Kalcacæstir, and there fixed her dwelling. Hilda, the servant of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to reduce all things to a regular system, according as she had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan, and other religious men that knew her and loved her, frequently visited and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and inclination to the service of God.

When she had for some years governed this monastery, wholly intent upon establishing a regular life, it happened that she also undertook either to build or to arrange a monastery in the place called Streoneshalh, which work she industriously performed; for she put this monastery under the same regular discipline as she had done the former; and taught there the strictest observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and charity; so that, after the example of the primitive Church, no person was there rich, and none poor, all being in common to all, and none having any property. Her prudence was so great, that not only indifferent persons, but even kings and princes, as occasion offered, asked and received her advice. She obliged those who were under her direction to attend so much to reading of the divine Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of jus-

tice, that many might be thus found fit for ecclesiastical duties and to serve at the altar.

In short, we afterwards saw five bishops taken out of that monastery and all of them men of singular merit and sanctity.

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Thus this servant of Christ, the Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called Mother, for her singular piety and grace, was not only an example of good life to those that lived in her monastery, but afforded occasion of amendment and salvation to many who lived at a distance, and to whom the fame was brought of her industry and virtue ; for it was necessary that the dream which her mother Bregusuid had, during her infancy, should be fulfilled. At the time that her husband Hereric lived in banishment under Cerdic, King of the Britons, where he was also poisoned, she fancied in a dream, that she was seeking for him most carefully and could find no sign of him anywhere ; but after having used all her industry to seek him, she found a most precious jewel under her garment, which, whilst she was looking on it very attentively, cast such a light as spread itself throughout all Britain ; which dream was brought to pass in her daughter that we speak of, whose life was a bright example,

not only to herself, but to all who desired to live well.

When she had governed this monastery many years, it pleased Him who has made such merciful provision for our salvation, to give her holy soul the trial of a long sickness, to the end that, according to the Apostle's example, her virtue might be perfected in infirmity.

Falling into a fever, she fell into a violent heat, and was afflicted with the same for six years continually; during all which time she never failed either to return thanks to her Maker, or publicly and privately to instruct the flock committed to her charge; for by her own example she admonished all persons to serve God dutifully in perfect health, and always to return thanks to Him in adversity or bodily infirmity. In the seventh year of her sickness, the distemper turning inwards, she approached her last day, and about cock-crowing, having received the *viaticum* of the most Holy Communion, and called together the handmaidens of Christ who were within the same monastery, she admonished them to persevere in evangelical peace among themselves, and with all others; and as she was uttering her words of advice she joyfully saw death approaching, or if I may speak in the words of our Lord, she passed from death to life.

That same night it pleased Almighty God, by a manifest vision, to make known her death in another monastery at a distance from hers, one which she had built that same year and is called Hakenes. There was in that monastery a certain nun called Begu, who having dedicated her virginity to God, had served Him upwards of thirty years in the monastic life. This nun, being then in the dormitory of the Sisters, on a sudden heard the well known sound of a bell in the air, which used to awake and call them to prayers when any one of them was taken out of this world, and opening her eyes, as she thought, she saw the top of the house open and a strong light pour in from above ; looking earnestly upon that light, she saw the soul of the aforesaid servant of God in that same light, attended and conducted to heaven by angels. Then awaking, and seeing the other Sisters lying round about her, she perceived that what she had seen was either in a dream or a vision ; and rising immediately in a great fright, she ran to the virgin who then presided in the monastery instead of the Abbess, and whose name was Frigyth, and with many tears and sighs, told her that the Abbess Hilda, Mother of them all, had departed this life, and had in her sight ascended to eternal bliss, and to the company of the inhabitants of heaven, with a great light, and with angels con-

ducting her. Frigyth, having heard it, awoke all the Sisters, and calling them to the church, admonished them to pray and sing psalms for her soul ; which they did during the remainder of the night ; and at break of day, the Brothers came with the news of her death from the place where she had died. They answered that they knew it before, and then related how and when they had heard it ; by which it appeared that her death had been revealed to them in a vision the very same hour that the others said she had died. Thus it was by Heaven happily ordained, that when some saw her departure out of this world, the others should be acquainted with her admittance into the spiritual life which is eternal. The monasteries are about thirteen miles distant from each other.

It is also reported that her death was, in a vision, made known the same night to one of the holy virgins who loved her most passionately, in the same monastery where the said servant of God died. This nun saw her soul ascend to heaven in the company of angels ; and this she declared the very same hour that it happened, to those servants of Christ that were with her ; and awakened them to pray for her soul, even before the rest of the congregation had heard of her death. The truth of which was known to the whole monastery in the morning. This same

nun was at that time with some other servants of Christ, in the remotest part of the monastery, where the women, newly converted, were wont to be upon trial till they were regularly instructed and taken into the society of the congregation.

There was in this Abbess's monastery a certain Brother, particularly remarkable for the grace of God, who was wont to make pious and religious verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him out of Scripture, he soon after put the same into poetical expressions of much sweetness and humility, in English, which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him ; for he did not learn the art of poetry from men but from God ; for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those which relate to religion suited his religious tongue ; for having lived in a secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of versifying ; for which reason, being sometimes at entertainments when it was agreed, for the sake of mirth, that all present should sing in their turns, when he saw the instrument come towards him, he rose up from table and returned home.

Having done so at a certain time, and gone out of the house where the entertainment was, to the stable where he had to take care of the horses that night, he there composed himself to rest at the proper time, when a person appeared to him in his sleep and saluting him by his name, said, 'Cædmon, sing some song to me.' He answered, 'I cannot sing; for that was the reason why I left the entertainment and retired to this place, because I could not sing.' The other who talked to him replied, 'However, you shall sing.' — 'What shall I sing?' he rejoined. 'Sing the beginning of created things,' said the other. Hereupon, he presently began to sing verses to the praise of God, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was thus: 'Now are we bound to praise the Maker of the heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of glory; how He, being the eternal God, became the author of all miracles, who first, as almighty preserver of the human race, created Heaven for the sons of men as the roof of the house, and next the Earth.'

This is the sense, but not the words, in order as he sang them in his sleep; for verses though never so well composed cannot be literally translated out of one language into another without losing much of their beauty and loftiness. Awaking from his sleep, Cædmon remembered all that he had sung in his

dream, and soon added much more to the same effect in verse worthy of the Deity.

In the morning he came to the steward, his superior, and having acquainted him with the gift he had received, was conducted to the Abbess, by whom he was ordered, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream and repeat the verses, that they might all give their judgment what it was and whence his verse proceeded. They all concluded that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. They expounded to him a passage in Holy Writ, either historical or doctrinal, ordering him, if he could, to put the same into verse. Having undertaken it, he went away, and returning the next morning, gave it to them composed in most excellent verse; whereupon the Abbess, embracing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit and to take upon him the monastic life; which being accordingly done, she associated him to the rest of the brethren in her monastery and ordered that he should be taught the whole series of sacred history. Thus Cædmon, keeping in mind all he heard, and as it were chewing the cud, converted the same into most harmonious verse; and sweetly repeating the same, made his masters, in their turn, his hearers. He sang the Creation of the World, the origin of Man, and all the history of Genesis; and

made many verses on the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the land of promise, with many other histories from Holy Writ ; the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection of our Lord and his Ascension into heaven ; the coming of the Holy Ghost and the preaching of the Apostles ; also, the terror of future Judgment, the horror of the pains of Hell, and the delights of Heaven ; besides many more about the Divine benefits and judgments by which he endeavoured to turn away all men from the love of vice and to excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions ; for he was a very religious man and humbly submissive to regular discipline, but full of zeal against those who behaved themselves otherwise ; for which reason he ended his life happily.

For when the time for his departure drew near, he laboured for the space of fourteen days under a bodily infirmity which seemed to prepare the way ; yet so moderate that he could talk and walk the whole time. In his neighbourhood was the house to which those that were sick and shortly likely to die were carried. He desired the person that attended him, in the evening as the night came on in which he was to depart this life, to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. This person, wondering why he should desire it, because there was as

yet no sign of his dying soon, did what he had ordered. He accordingly went there, and conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner with the rest that were in the house before, when it was passed midnight, he asked them 'Whether they had the Holy Eucharist there?' They answered, 'What need of the Eucharist, for you are not likely to die since you talk so merrily with us, as if you were in perfect health?' 'However,' said he, 'bring me the Eucharist.' Having received the same into his hand, he asked, whether they were all in charity with him and without any enmity or rancour? They answered, that they were all in perfect charity and free from anger; and in their turn, asked him whether he was in the same mind towards them? He answered, 'I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God.' Then strengthening himself with the heavenly *viaticum*, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked how near the time was when the brothers were to be awakened to sing the nocturnal praises of our Lord. They answered, 'It is not far off.' Then he said, 'Well, let us wait that hour'; and signing himself with the sign of the Cross, he laid his head on the pillow and, falling into a slumber, ended his life so in silence.

Thus it came to pass, that as he had served God with a simple and pure mind and undisturbed devo-

tion, so he now departed to His presence, leaving the world by a quiet death ; and that tongue which had composed so many holy words in praise of the Creator, uttered its last words whilst he was in the act of signing himself with the Cross, and recommending himself into His hands; and by what has been here said he seems to have had foreknowledge of his death."

Such is the remarkable account of the "Coming" of Cædmon preserved in the writings of the ablest and most trustworthy historian of the Anglo-Saxon era.

The historical truth of this account, however, and even the very existence of any such name as "Cædmon" have been called in question by at least one eminent English archæologist.* These and similar questions, although highly interesting to the antiquary, are in no sense of vital importance to the modern student of literature. Whether any such poet as Homer or as Shakespeare ever lived, or even if they did live, whether they wrote the works commonly attributed to them, are not matters of prime importance. The fact of the existence of these immortal works is amply sufficient, and although we should like to know somewhat of the life, the character, and the surroundings of the men who so largely

* *Vide* Note G.

contribute to our intellectual pleasure, yet, happily, our mental gratification is not limited by the possession of a knowledge of these facts.

It is so in the case of Cædmon. The poem *exists*, and from internal evidence can be proved to belong to the early days of Anglo-Saxon Christianity; and whether Beda's account is strictly historical, or whether such a ceorl as Cædmon ever lived, are questions of little if of any moment.

At the same time, we are not left entirely in the dark as to these mooted questions. With regard to Beda's narrative we have *prima facie* evidence that the historian received it directly from some one of the members of the celebrated double monastery at Whitby, where Cædmon is stated to have lived and died. According to Beda's chronology, which cannot be gainsaid, Cædmon must have been living while the future historian was a child; and the monastery in which Beda was reared and educated, being situated in the same section of the country as the lady Hilda's, viz., in Northumbria, must have had intimate relations with the latter. In this way, the traditions of one monastery would naturally be known, (and known in their original setting,) to the inmates of the neighbouring monastery.

The story of Cædmon's miraculously discovered gifts as a poet, which formed part of the legendary

history of the monastery at Whitby, was doubtless the poetic rendering of an actual fact. The author of the Anglo-Saxon poem may, or may not, have had any such dream as the legend describes, but the existence of the poem is a fact ; and the tale of the bashful, super-sensitive hind leaving his companions because of his ignorance of music and falling into dreams of what he *might* have sung, is so true to nature that we may well regard it as the fanciful setting of a poetic age.

Nor is there anything strange in this development of legend-lore. The memory of the self-sacrificing life of the Lady Hilda has been preserved in story by the peasantry around her former home for more than a thousand years. An antiquary of Yorkshire tells us that when the sunbeams fall among the Abbey ruins, the spectators who stand on the west side of Whitby churchyard, so as just to see the most northerly part of the Abbey, imagine they perceive, in one of the highest windows there, the resemblance of a woman arrayed in a shroud ; and it is commonly believed among the peasantry, to be an appearance of the Lady Hilda in her glorified state. And so, she, who among an untaught people diffused the light of the Gospel and the warmth of its charity, still appears to the half-taught of to-day as a vision of sunshine in the old place of her toil.

As to the poem itself, it is certain from Beda's own statement, that he translated the opening lines of Cædmon's poem, as he gives them in his *Historia*, either from some manuscript which he had consulted, or from some version which he had heard recited and had committed to memory; and further, it is clear from his own statement that he did not attempt to give an exact translation of the original Anglo-Saxon but only a paraphrase. After quoting the lines in question, he says: "Verses never so well composed cannot be literally translated out of one language into another without losing much of their beauty and loftiness."

In the extant historical writings of the time between Beda and King Alfred, we do not recall any reference to Cædmon or his poem; but in King Alfred's translation of Beda's *Historia* we have Beda's narrative repeated, and the opening lines of Cædmon's poem given in *Anglo-Saxon*.

Whether King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon version is a re-translation of Beda's Latin, or a transcript from the original Anglo-Saxon, has been questioned; but on purely critical grounds we are convinced that King Alfred translated from the Latin, and did not copy from any Anglo-Saxon original.

This point will come out very clearly if we examine, side by side, the Latin wording of the *His-*

toria and the wording of the Anglo-Saxon translation of King Alfred.

“Nunc laudare debemus auctorem regni cælestis, potentiam creatoris et consilium illius, facta patris gloriæ; quomodo ille, cum sit æternus deus, omnium miraculorum auctor extitit, qui primo filiis hominum cælum pro culmine tecti, dehinc terram custos humani generis omnipotens creavit.”

So writes Beda in his Latin version of Cædmon's opening lines.

In King Alfred's translation this passage is rendered as follows :

Nu we sceolan herian
 Heofon-ríces weard
 Metodes mihte
 And his mód-gethonc
 Wera wuldor-fæder
 Swá he wundra gehwæs
 Éce dryhten
 Oord onstealde
 He ærest gesceop
 Eorthan bearnum
 Heofon to hrófe
 Hálig scyppend
 Thá middangeard
 Mancynnes weard
 Éce dryhten
 Æfter téode
 Firum foldan
 Fréa ælmihtig

Anyone who is familiar with the structure and rhythm of Anglo-Saxon poetry, would have little, if any, hesitation in deciding that these lines are not, and could not be, a copy of any original Anglo-Saxon verses; while a comparison of these two passages in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, apart from any other evidence, would show that they resemble each other so closely as to warrant the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon version is simply a translation of the Latin. Indeed, that this is the case, might almost be inferred from a comparison of the two passages in a modern English rendering :

“Now are we to praise the Maker of the heavenly Kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of Glory; how He, being the eternal God, became the author of all miracles, who first, as Almighty preserver of the human race, created Heaven for the sons of men, as the roof of the house, and next, the Earth.”

Such is the English rendering of the opening lines of Cædmon's poem as given by Beda.

If, now, we compare this rendering with a literal translation of King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon version, the point which we are making will stand out in a very clear light :

Now must we praise
The Guardian of Heaven's kingdom,

The Creator's might,
And his mind's thought ;
Glorious Father of men !
As of every wonder He,
Lord Eternal,
Formed the beginning.
He first framed
For the children of Earth
The Heaven as a roof ;
Holy Creator !
Then mid-Earth,
The Guardian of mankind,
The Eternal Lord,
Afterwards produced ;
The Earth for men,
Lord Almighty !

We thus possess historic testimony, of the highest authority, that during Beda's boyhood a sacred poem on the subject of the "Fall of Man" had been produced by an inmate of the double monastery of the Lady Hilda at Whitby ; a poem so remarkable as to have commanded, in after years, the notice of a cleric and critic as learned as the Venerable Beda, and of such poetic excellence as to have elicited his highest commendation.

It would seem inexplicable, if we did not know the history of this early age, how a literary work of such importance should have been allowed to sink into total oblivion ; and even the manuscripts of the

poem have become wholly forgotten. Still such was the case. The incursions of the Danes, and the destruction of the monastic libraries which followed, added to the ignorance and indifference of Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics, and the ravages of time itself, led, as we know, to the loss of many valuable writings. It was not until the seventeenth century, as we have before seen, that the manuscript of a sacred poem, corresponding to the one described by Beda, was discovered by Archbishop Ussher. This manuscript was used by Somner in the preparation of his Anglo-Saxon dictionary, and was subsequently presented by the Archbishop to Francis Dujon, known to all the scholars of his day under the *nom de plume* of Junius.

This famous manuscript, the only one now known to exist in England, is in the Junian collection in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, a small parchment volume in folio, containing two hundred and twenty-nine pages, the first two hundred and twelve of which are apparently in the handwriting of the tenth century.

The illuminations, or rather drawings, which accompany the manuscript, do not reach beyond the ninety-sixth page, although in almost every succeeding page, to the very end of the volume, blank spaces, intended to receive illuminations, occur, show-

ing that in the illustrations as well as in the text, the manuscript was left unfinished. In the whole series of fifty-three plates, the colouring of but one has been completed ; the others being drawn simply in black and white, with a view, apparently, of being coloured later by the illuminator. Where colours have been introduced they are simply outlines in brown, vermillion, and green.

Junius, in the preface to the edition of this manuscript, which he published at Amsterdam 1655, does not hesitate to pronounce it a copy of the long lost poem of Cædmon described by Beda in his *Historia* ; and he does so, and doubtless correctly, on the ground of the correspondence which exists between the Ussher manuscript and Beda's description, no less than from the structure and general characteristics of the language.

It is true that the opening lines of the Junian manuscript do not correspond *verbally* either with the Latin of Beda or with the Anglo-Saxon of King Alfred ; but as we have before stated, Beda did not pretend to give more than the *sense* of the passage, and Alfred avowedly copied from the original of Beda. Hence, it is not strange, but only what we might have expected *a priori*, that the manuscript of the poem, if ever discovered, although it might not agree *verbatim*, would agree substantially, with

the passage as given by Beda and his translator, King Alfred. And this proves to be the case with regard to the Junian manuscript as the following comparison will conclusively show :

FROM KING ALFRED'S BEDA.

Nu we sceolan herian
 Heofon-rices weard
 Metoddes mihte
 And his mód-geþonc
 Wera wuldor-fæder
 Swá he wundra gehwæs
 Éce Dryhten
 Oord onstealde
 He ærest gesceop
 Eorþan bearnum
 Heofon to hrófe
 Hálig scyppend
 Thá middangeard
 Mancynnes weard
 Éce Dryhten
 Æfter téode
 Firum foldan
 Fréa ælmihtig.

FROM THE JUNIAN MS.

Us is riht micel
 Thæt we ródera weard
 Wereda wuldor-cining
 Wordum herigen
 Móðum lufien
 He is mæгна spéd
 Heofod ealra
 Heah-gesceafta
 Fréa ælmihtig
 Næs him fruma æfre
 Ór geworden
 Ne nu ende cymth
 Écean Dryhtnes.

In this fragment, consisting of but eighteen short lines, we have the following epithets of the Deity, all of frequent occurrence in the so-called *Paraphrase* :—Heofon rices weard ; Éce Dryhten ; Hálig Scyppend ; Mancynnes weard ; Fréa Ælmihtig ; and there is scarcely a single phrase that is not common

to both compositions, while the same identity prevails in their whole structure. The exordium of the Poem conveys exactly the same thought as the Hymn cited by Beda, and clothed very nearly in the same mode of expression.

Few, if any, who have read the poem in the original, and have given it the close study that its intrinsic merits deserve, will refuse to accord to the monk of Whitby the possession of high poetic gifts; while some few will not hesitate to accept, even in this nineteenth century, the estimate of Beda, "*Et quidem et alii post illum in gente Anglorum religiosa poemata facere tentabant, sed nullus ei æquiparari potuit. Namque ipse non ab hominibus, neque per hominem institutus, canendi artem didicit, sed divinitus adjutus gratis canendi donum accepit.*"

"Others after him in the English nation were wont to attempt to compose religious poems, but none could compare with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry by man, neither through man, but was divinely aided, and through God's grace received the gift of song."

CHAPTER III.

Analysis of Cædmon's "Fall of Man."

THE poem which we are about to analyse, is the earliest strain of sacred song that has come down to us from the distant past of England's poetic records.

It has been the fashion to style this famous relic of Anglo-Saxon literature a *Scripture Paraphrase*, but such a title is both inadequate and misleading. It is inadequate, since Cædmon's work though in the main based, as we shall subsequently see, on certain statements in the Hebrew Scriptures, on Biblical hints and Oriental imagery, is, nevertheless, in the form in which we have received it, virtually an original production, incorporating Rabbinical fancies, glosses, and comments, but still adorned with such innumerable touches of the poet's own imagination as to constitute it a distinct and independent version. Moreover, to designate it a *Paraphrase* is misleading, inasmuch as in the most highly finished portion of the work the author shows him-

self to be no mere paraphrast, but a man endowed with the soul and fire of the born poet.

But while this is true, not only of that part of the poem which treats of the "Fall of Man," but also of other portions where the expression, the versification and the rhythm evince careful elaboration, and the imagery is at its highest point of perfection, still, other portions of the work are comparatively so inferior to the major part of the poem, as to lend countenance to the commonly accepted title of "Paraphrase." Indeed, from a mere casual reading of the original, one is apt to form the opinion that the poem is the work of more than one writer; and this, from the very unevenness of the style; but a closer study shows conclusively that it is the work of a single mind, though written under differing conditions, some parts having been more carefully elaborated and more highly finished than others.

Whether that part of Cædmon's poem which relates to the "Fall of Man," can justly be entitled *an epic*, may be open to question. If an epic is a "metrical romance," no matter whether it be founded on history, on mythology, on theomachy, or on the purely imaginative creations of the poet, then it would be difficult to deny, to this part of Cædmon's poem, the lofty title of epic. It is a

romance or narrative based on Hebrew mythology, interspersed with folk-lore on matters supermundane, mundane, and inframundane; on Bible hints and ecclesiastical imaginings; but still, a connected story of the traditionally received version of the Fall. It differs from the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and the Arthurian story, inasmuch as it is not a mere national epic, or an epic of purely national events. It is not a story of one planet alone, or even of the whole Starry Universe. In this, it differs from other prominent types of the Epic. Its field of action is infinite space, and its heroes are not human warriors, or even conventional demi-gods, but supernatural beings who can defy all the known laws of gravity, and can assume at will any form whatsoever, be it "toad" or "stripling cherub."

The central figure of the romance is an almighty Being, supposed to represent the Deity, who, in a burst of terrestrial anger, hurls from the Empyrean the angels who attempt to oppose His will, and subsequently suffers His newly created Man, who knows nothing of Sin, and less of Satan, to be exposed to the machinations of a criminal Archangel, whose colossal intelligence had made him the most conspicuous figure in the Empyrean, next to the epic Deity himself. This being is the true hero of the plot,—a Fiend who is bent on the most demon-

like scheme of revenge that archangelic ingenuity could conceive.

15 Now, what does all this mean? It cannot be denied that, at the present day, Milton's poetic narrative of the Creation and Fall, are in possession of the imagination of the average amateur theologian; and of the intellectually immature masses of England, of America, and of the English-speaking races generally. It is not taken as a Talmud or commentary, or even as a supplementary Bible. It is the *only* narrative generally known; and if the tiny, authentic Scripture "original," which, in the course of centuries has grown into the modern fully developed *Epic of the Fall of Man*, were to be excerpted from the canonical Scriptures, as all that the Bible had to say on the subject, and this were to be presented, in its unconnected entirety, the result would not only cause a vacant stare of astonishment on the face of the average Protestant, but would be likely to arouse a suspicion that someone had tampered with the Bible, and had suppressed the larger part of a fine, old-fashioned Bible story.

What a distinguished writer has said of Milton's epic, we can apply with equal truth to Cædmon's poem: "In so far as *Paradise Lost* is an expression of Milton's habitual mode of thought, respecting Man and History, in relation to an eternal and un-

known Infinity, it is so by way of what the Germans call *Verstellung*, viz., popular image or representation; and not by way of *Begriff*, viz., pure or philosophic notion." Cædmon deals with his subject as a *Verstellung*. He represents, by popular image or representation, the traditional ideas of his day on this subject, and does not attempt to philosophise, or explain in the abstract his notion of the origin of Evil or of Death.

And it is so in Milton. Both, give in the popular imagery of their time, and in poetic form, the current theological traditions of the age. Cædmon reproduces sixth century, Catholic tradition in popular dressing. Milton, with all the theological developments and popular conceits of the Middle Ages behind him, with regard to Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, presents, in more modern garb, the Protestant tradition of a thousand years later;—a tradition which had been evolved, since the so-called Reformation, by the occult principle of Protestant selection.

Cædmon's poem is then an epic, a *Verstellung*, if we accord these titles to Milton's more ambitious work. It is an epic of the whole of creation; of infinitude in space and in time; and, in common with *Paradise Lost*, is charming, illogical, and at times incomprehensible.

Although Cædmon's work is not a mere para-

phrase, but a grand sacred poem, yet it is to be borne in mind that the intention of the author was not, like Milton, to immortalise *himself*, but to instruct the people, by giving the clergy and gleemen, and through them the people at large, a poetic version of the traditionally received account of the "Fall of Man," and other sacred narratives.

Whence Cædmon obtained the information which he evidently possessed of Rabbinical learning, it is impossible to say; yet it is beyond doubt that he is indebted to some of the Oriental or Rabbinical commentators, for many an idea which he has made tributary. It is well known, that the Anglo-Saxon Church was in direct touch, ecclesiastically, with the East, and hence, it is perfectly supposable, that Cædmon obtained his rabbinical interpretations directly through Oriental sources. It is more probable, however, to suppose that the apostles of Roman Christianity in England, had carried with them the traditional Eastern exposition of the book of Genesis, and so had established a traditional *consensus* which formed the basis of the teaching on this subject in every monastery in the land.

In order to understand fully this poem of the monk of Whitby, it is absolutely necessary to picture to the mind the whole scene of the Creation and the

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Fall, as conceived by the brilliant brain of the Anglo-Saxon *scop*.

The poet begins his sacred song with a description of Heaven or the Empyrean, where the Deity, the

Glory King of Hosts,

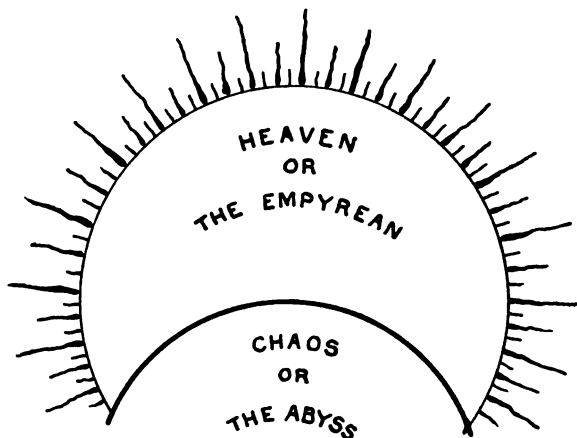
sits enthroned in Light, Majesty, and Bliss ineffable, and surrounded by the ten tribes of the celestial hierarchy.

This Heaven or Empyrean, as conceived by Cædmon, is not the "bright framework" of Earth and planets, or of Sun and starry systems, since none of these, as yet, had any existence; but an imaginary sphere of infinite radius,—(the phrase is of course unthinkable),—divided into two concaves, Heaven or the Empyrean and Chaos or the Abyss.

The upper of these concaves of primeval space is to be imagined as a boundless region of Light, Joy and Glory, in the midst of which, the Deity, though omnipresent, has His visible dwelling. Here, He is the Chieftain of an infinitude of intelligences called the Angels, who, though dispersed throughout the ranges of Heaven's boundless domain, yet lead, severally, their mighty lives, performing the behests of Deity, or lost in the abandonment of adoration.

The other half or concave of primeval space, Chaos or the Abyss, is a limitless ocean of universal dark-

ness, uselessness, and lifelessness, wherein the primal elements battle unceasingly in blustering confusion ; no Angel having ever winged his way down into its repulsive obscurities. The opal floor of the Empyrean divides the two concaves ; while beneath, unvisited of Light, Chaos howls and rages and stag-nates eternally.



Before we proceed farther, however, in this analysis it may be well to emphasise one most important point in the elucidation of the poem, viz. : that the descriptions and illustrative diagrams which may be introduced in this analysis are not mere fancies of what Cædmon *may* have conceived in his scheme of the poem, but are actually what he *must* have had, and did have, in his mind when he began to write

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his version of the "Fall of Man," and which he most tenaciously kept in view from first to last.

That such is the case may be conclusively proved from the words of the poem itself; and often from the illuminations of the manuscript, which may be taken as a tenth-century commentary on the original text, by the artist of the Scriptorium, in which the manuscript was written.

In order to bring out this point in the clearest possible light, it will be necessary to adduce, in confirmation, such passages of the poem, and to introduce such of the illuminations of the manuscript, as may have a direct bearing on the views which will be advanced in the present examination of Cædmon's work.

In the opening lines of the narrative the poet tells us that the "Glory-King of Hosts"

. . . ruled the *Heavenly concaves*, which at first,
By power divine, were stretched out far and wide
Throughout unbounded space, celestial Home
Of those who guard the spirits of the just.

Here, the imagery in the term "Heavenly concaves" (A.-S. *bósmas*, Eng. *bosoms*), needs no comment, the two equal parts of the sphere being indicated with sufficient distinctness. But this is not all. In the following fac-similes of the illuminations

of the manuscript, it will be seen that the artist of the Scriptorium leaves no doubt as to his understanding of the scheme of the poem. In the passage where Cædmon sings of the beginning of Creation that

. . . o'er the Deep
Was swiftly borne, on bright and radiant wing,
The Spirit of the Lord,

the accompanying illumination shows the "Heavenly concaves" as the artist imagined Cædmon to have conceived them.

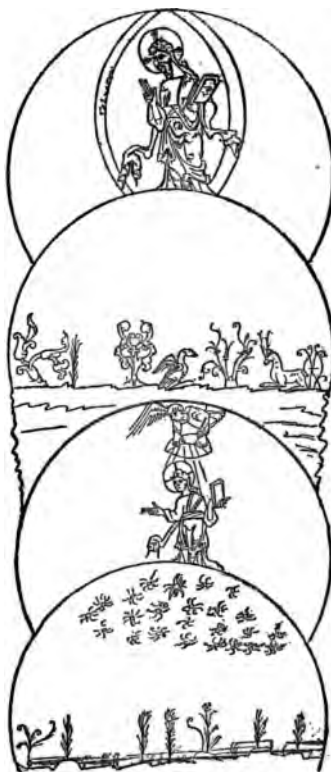


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The same artistic interpretation of primeval space, occurs a few lines farther on in the poem, when Heaven's "All-glorious Chief"

. . . severed Light from Darkness,
and bade

Rise the bright framework of the glistening stars.



This illumination has a double representation of the "Heavenly concaves," in the upper one of which is depicted the Deity in the act of severing Light from Darkness, and in the lower one of which He is causing to rise the brilliant Firmament. In both, however, the same pictorial imagery is preserved. There is, in each representation, an upper concave, the Empyrean or dwelling of the Deity; and a lower one, which is swart and dark and dim, and is termed the Deep, or Chaos, or the Abyss.

We are not left, however, to the imagination of the illuminator for the portrayal of the physical aspect of the lower concave or Chaos. Cædmon, early in the poem, describes the swart Abyss in his own weird, graphic style:

As yet was naught beneath God's radiant Throne
But gloom as dark as in the cavern reigns,
And this wide-spread Abyss stood deep and dim
In idle uselessness, distasteful sight
To Him the source of all creative power.
The mighty King, in mind resolved, beheld
The joyless shade and saw the lowering cloud
Lie swart and waste, like an eternal sea
Of blackest Night, beneath the effulgent glow
Of Light ineffable.

It is all important to keep this primal imagery in mind, since, as we shall subsequently see, upon this

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point will depend the right understanding of the poet's idea as a whole.

The poem opens with a grand outburst of praise to the Deity; a terrestrial *Gloria in Excelsis*, which forms a fitting exordium to the narrative which it introduces. The poet then describes, in brief, the treason of the proudest, most beloved Archangel in Heaven, and of the rebellious tribes, whose will he had subtly alienated from their rightful allegiance. The Archangel's proud boast,

" In the North part of God's sublime domain *
Will I a kingdom found, a palace rear,"

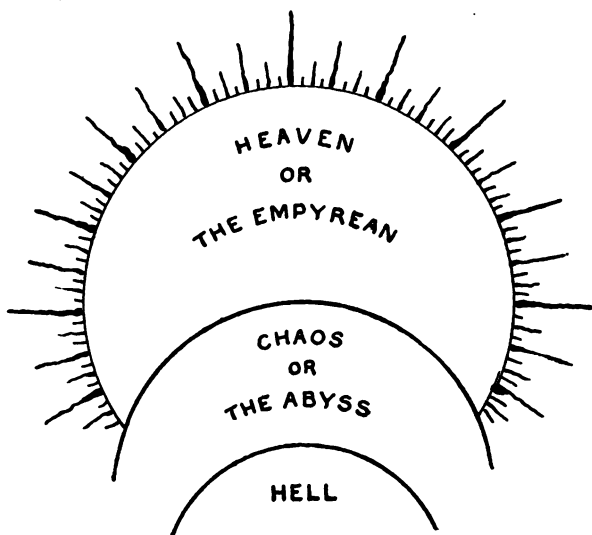
arouses the righteous wrath of the Deity, who forthwith forms a place of exile, and thither banishes the rebel host who have been faithless to their high estate,

Down the dark, steep, unutterable path
That leads to Hell.

It will therefore be necessary, now, to modify our diagram of primeval space. Hitherto, there have been but two concaves mentioned by Cædmon, the Empyrean and Chaos; but, with the formation of Hell, a small concave is carved, by the Almighty, out of the nethermost part of Chaos, as a torture-house for His traitor-Archangel and his band, and

* *Vide* Note H.

divided from the Empyrean by the broad belt of Chaos. This "exile-house" is represented as a vast region of fire, sulphurous lake, plain, and mountain, and of every form of fiery and icy torment. The conditions of the poem require, therefore, now three divisions of primeval space; the Empyrean, Chaos, and Hell.



Among the illuminations of the manuscript, there are two which show distinctly the artist's interpretation of the changed conditions of the picture.

In the following illumination the three divisions of space are clearly delineated. The Deity, surrounded by adoring Cherubim and Seraphim, is

depicted as at rest within the concave of the Empyrean. Satan, chained to the floor of Hell, is paying the penalty of his reckless ambition; while between the Empyrean and Hell the fallen Angels are being hurled through Chaos to their place of doom.



In another of the illuminations, depicting the return of Hell's Champion Fiend after the Fall of Man, the blackness of Chaos is vividly represented as surrounding Hell proper, and the glare of the surging fires within, darting upwards through the Gates of Hell, like a fire-cloud seen through the mist, illu-

mines, for a small space, the lowest boundaries of Chaos.



In this, the first and introductory section of the poem, Cædmon gives a skilful and succinct statement of his theme, and adds such details of the setting of the narrative as would enable a monastic, or even a rustic, audience to picture to the mind, in correct perspective, the scenes which his imagination is about to portray. In other words, it is a masterly outlining of the whole argument of the poem, end-

ing as a sub-climax with the "deep-racking pain" of the fiends in Hell.

The next section, which is the true beginning of the story, opens with the deep peace that reigned in Heaven after the expulsion of the rebel Angels; and depicts the Deity, as resolved in mind, to re-people with a better race the Northern quarter of His celestial domain, which had been left vacant by the fall of Satan and his followers. It is at this point, that the poet gives his fine description of the concave of Chaos, which we have already quoted; an eternal sea of blackest Night, forever surging and raging beneath the "vast celestial Firmament" or Empyrean.

Within this concave of seething elements and primal darkness, the Deity resolves to create a new World or Starry Universe and, at its centre, form an earthly Paradise as the abode of the favoured Being, whom He was about to make in His own image and similitude. The poet then sings successively of the creation of Light, the raising of the starry Firmament, and the separation of Land and Water, which, together, comprise the work of Creation of the first two and part of the third Days.

At this point, there is a break in the manuscript, and vestiges showing that three leaves of the poem have been cut out.

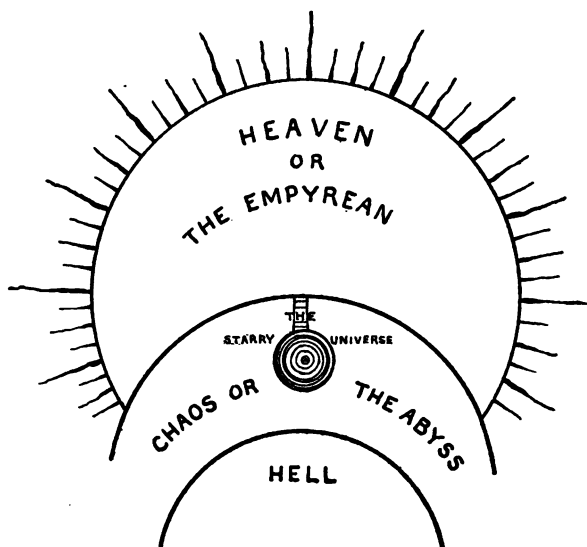
The narrative is then resumed with the account of the formation of Eve on the sixth and last Day of Creation, and the section ends with the greater Benediction, when the Deity blesses his masterpiece of creative skill, the new-formed Man, and utters His threefold mandate, to teem and multiply and fill the earth; to assume control over all creation; and strictly to abstain from the alluring fruit of the Tree of Death. This work accomplished, the Angels' Chieftain returns to the Empyrean, leaving to Man the earthly concave as his home.

The conditions of the setting of the narrative in this section of the poem, require one further change in the diagram of infinite space. The World or Universe, as conceived by Cædmon in his description of the Creation, is not the little planet that we call Earth, but the whole of the Starry Universe which surrounds us, as far as the eye can see, with its entire canopy of planets and suns and fixed stars, hung as it were at its highest point or zenith from the Empyrean. The Cædmonian diagram, as finally adapted to the necessities of the narrative, will henceforth consist of four concaves; the Empyrean or Heaven, the World or Starry Universe, Chaos or the Abyss, and Hell.

As, in the case of the other concaves which have already been described, so here, we are not left to

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mere conjecture, or to the play of our own imagination for our understanding of the poem; but have both Cædmon's verse, and the artist's drawings to guide us.



The poet tells us :

Then Holy God resolved, *beneath the vast,
Celestial firmament (tho' still within
His boundless realms), to form a beauteous World*
With overarching skies and waters wide
And earthly creatures filled, in place of those
Whom headlong He had hurled from His abode.

And the position of this Starry Universe in space,
here so clearly defined, is rendered even clearer still,

by the following illumination in the manuscript, descriptive of the formation of Eve from the side of Adam as he slept; and in order that the reader might make no mistake as to the interpretation of the drawing, the scribe has added, in the margins, a



brief statement of what was intended to be understood by each part of the picture. At the head of the illumination, in Anglo-Saxon, we are told "Here God's Angels proceed from Heaven into Paradise." On the right-hand side are the words, "Here the Lord cast sleep upon Adam and took a rib from his

Analysis of Cædmon's "Fall of Man" 113

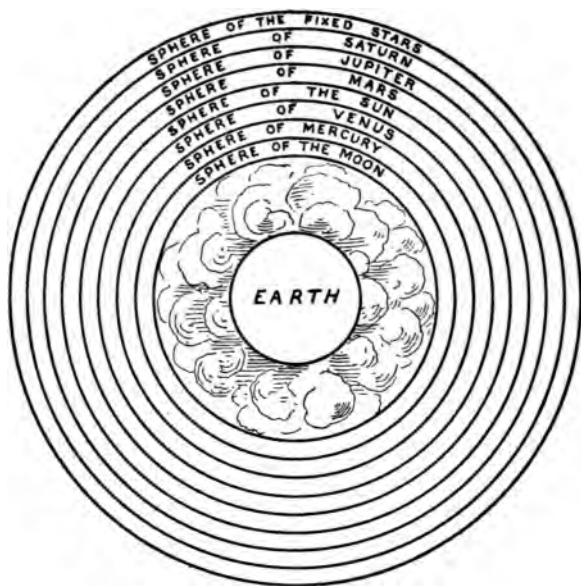
side and created his wife from that rib"; and on the left hand we read, "Here the Lord created Adam's wife, Eve."

From this illumination, as well as from the wording of the poem, we must suppose that the poet intended this "Starry Sphere" as attached, at its north pole or zenith, to the Gates of the Empyrean by a celestial stairway, so that, along this channel of communication, a flood of light, darting downwards from the Empyrean into Chaos, through the opened Gates, and commingling with the shimmer of the Spheres below, would make the upper pole of this Starry Universe a blaze of golden mist.

The whole of this part of the poem, presupposes the Ptolemaic system of astronomy;—the only system taught in Cædmon's day, or indeed for nearly a thousand years subsequently. Even so late as Milton's time, as we shall subsequently see, the Copernican system was far from being universally acknowledged by the scientific world, and both Dante and Milton built their poems, as Cædmon did, on the erroneous, though popular, astronomy of their own day.

According to the Ptolemaic system, what we have called the Starry Universe, hanging close by the Empyrean, was supposed to be an immense sphere cut or carved out of infinite space, and consisting of

eight concentric parallel Spheres, diminishing gradually in size, and wheeling one within the other, like a nest of Chinese balls, with our Earth, surrounded by its atmosphere, at the centre. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy, thus viewed the whole visible



Universe from the Earth as the immovable centre of all things.

Such a sphere, as we have just described, if cut through at right angles to its polar axis, would show a plane or surface diagram similar to many which

may be seen in the old text-books or manuals on Astronomy such as Milton used in teaching his pupils.*

At the centre, is the Earth, fixed and immovable while the eight concentric heavenly Spheres (represented on this plane surface as concentric circles) revolve around this fixed centre.

It is almost needless to say that the lines dividing the Spheres one from another, as marked out in the above diagram, are mathematical lines, *i. e.*, popularly speaking, purely imaginary lines; each planet, sun or belt of fixed stars, keeping to its own well-defined Sphere or orbit, but with no visible lines of demarcation between such orbits.

To one descending the celestial steps from the Gates of the Empyrean, and gazing down into the heart of this great globe of concentric Spheres through the opening or entrance at its zenith, the scene presented would be one of surpassing grandeur. The first thing that would strike the eye would be the dazzling belt of the glittering dust of the Fixed Stars; then below, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars bounding along in their enormous parallel Spheres or orbits; below this again, the blinding splendour of the circuit of the Sun; still lower, the calmer pathways of Venus and Mercury; then the Sphere of the

* *Vide* Note I.

pale Moon, the satellite, with her reflected silver light ; and finally, at the centre, at the very heart of these bewildering immensities of space, the impassive Earth with her veil of atmosphere and fire and water, the abode of God's creative masterpiece.

Of course, we know that, astronomically, this is all wrong ; and yet it has served as the setting for three of the grandest sacred poems of which literature can boast.

In the third section of the poem, Cædmon returns to the point at which he had broken off the narrative to describe the creation of Man ; and now resumes the thread of his story, recapitulating, with fuller details, the origin of the rebellion in Heaven and the expulsion of the rebel hosts.

He begins his fuller outburst of song by telling of the creation of the ten Angel-tribes whom God had

Moulded in his own similitude,

and had endowed with every heavenly grace. One of this angelic host, it seems, the Deity had raised to the highest pinnacle of intelligence and power: the most highly favoured subject of all the immortal denizens of the Empyrean. This Archangel, the trusted Vicegerent of the Deity, in course of time, begins to harbour dark and traitorous thoughts, until, at length, he frowns and becomes a rebel.

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The treason that is smouldering in his heart at length finds vent in a soliloquy of ambitious and self-proud thought, ending in a muttered resolve:

"No longer will I be His vassal-slave."

The Omnipresent One, knowing the innermost thought of the apostate Archangel, hurls the Fiend from his Empyrean throne, down the burning gulf to Hell. For three long days and three successive nights, are the Apostate and his guilty followers falling through Chaos, ere they reach the prison-house prepared by God as their place of exile. Here, amid the fiery torments of God's great torture-house, the traitor-angels lie stunned and prostrate in the deep, infernal gloom; till at length, aroused from their stupor, and seeing far off, through the gloom of Chaos, the distant glories of their former Seats, the supreme folly of the act their pride had allured them to perpetrate stands bare before them and, for a time, they resign themselves to the keen gnawings of relentless remorse.

In a sense, it is perfectly true, that the events related in this section are a recapitulation of the opening or introductory section of the poem; but a careful examination of the structure of the epic will show conclusively that Cædmon, far from evincing the crudeness of a tyro in his art, handles

the materials at his disposition in a most masterly way, adopting the skilful device of announcing his theme in brief, at the outset, and subsequently filling in the colouring of the picture when the outline has been sufficiently perfected.

But to proceed. In the next section, having recovered from their stupor,—the result of their three days' fall through Chaos,—the Apostates hold a plenary Council in Hell. Satan, though manacled and foot-bound with twisted iron bands, is the first to break the horrid silence of the fiery concave, and in an impassioned speech,—one of the most dramatic and effective portions of the poem,—gives utterance to his already well-matured scheme of revenge. Fettered in his iron Throne in deepest Hell, prostrate and powerless to rise, the fallen Archangel first pours forth, in blasphemous apostrophe, his bitter wrath against the Almighty and against the unequal and unmerited punishment of his rebel Angels; and, as a climax to this part of his unholy tirade, he discloses his gigantic scheme of becoming a Devil; living, henceforth, the life of a fiendish iconoclast, frustrating when possible the grand designs of the Deity and shattering the highest ideals of divine love and workmanship. In vivid terms, he tells of a fair World beneath the Empyrean, decreed of old, though designed and created only in

later days, where the Almighty had already formed the first of a new-born race of beings, akin in beauty of form to the Angels, but of inferior intelligence, with whom doubtless He intended to repeople the Northern palaces of Heaven left vacant by the fall of himself and his once princely retainers. To effect the ruin of this earth-born Man, by whatever means (so urges the Fiend), would foil the plans of the Deity and ensure substantial revenge.

Having thus disclosed his scheme, and having outlined his own ideal demon-course for the future life of his compeers, Satan suggests that they proceed to discuss the best plan for the successful issue of the proposed campaign.

As the inception of the idea of revenge, and the determination of the most vulnerable point of attack, are due to the arch-intelligence and brilliant brain of Satan, and to him alone, it is not surprising that in the peroration of his speech, when urging the importance of a well-defined plan of attack, he should give, (as he does), a hint as to his own fully matured views on the matter, and endeavour, in every possible way, to attain the object that he has in view. He accordingly appeals to the false fidelity and false loyalty of his followers in the past, and to his own lavish munificence; and declares that in no way can they repay his former regal generosity, now that he

is fetter-bound in Hell, than by efficient aid in carrying out his cherished scheme and effecting the eternal ruin of Man. Then, as though to inflame their drooping ambition, he holds forth the dazzling promise, sealed by his sovereign oath, that the daring one who should first proclaim the Fall of Man, seduced by devil-craft, should be rewarded with the gift of the second throne in Hell's dominion and be his (Satan's) sole Vicegerent.

At this point in the manuscript there are three leaves wanting, which doubtless contained the account of the deliberations of the Council in Hell. Still, although the original lines in this part of the poem are lost to us, yet we can easily and surely surmise, from the sequel, what the result of these deliberations, (according to Cædmon), must have been.

The continuation of the narrative shows that the scheme proposed by Satan met with the approval of the assembled fiends, and that one more crafty and more daring than his fellows was chosen to undertake the perilous adventure.

We next find the apostate Angel, warrior-armed for the desperate enterprise, with every clasp fast and secure. This done, he urges his way, by strength of wing and limb, upwards to Hell's Gates. Passing this barrier, he speeds, like a spiral column, onwards

and upwards through the dark desolations of Chaos, till at length he descries far off the faint, soft light of the Starry Universe of which he is in search; and, entering at the zenith, or open point nearest the Empyrean, and passing downwards through the encircling Spheres, alights at length on the convex of Man's earthly Paradise.

With the opening of the fourth section of the poem, Satan's dark emissary, having reached the goal of his arduous journey, searches amid the luxuriant foliage of the Garden, for the newly God-created pair; and finally discovers them, reclining beneath the shade of two wide-spreading trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death. With devil-craft he takes the body of a worm; entwines himself around the Tree of Death; and with the luring fruit of the tree in hand, addresses his first sin-fraught word to Adam.

It is, at this point, that the clever subtlety or "devil-craft," as the poet calls it, of Hell's delegate first appears. He does not approach the Man as his Maker's foe, but as an angelic *messenger* from Heaven, charged with a commission from the Highest to bid Adam eat of the fruit of the Tree of Death; and, this behest fulfilled, to return to the Empyrean bearing the prayers of God's favoured child for any boon, whatsoever, that he might desire.

In spite, however, of the apparent naturalness of the visit of an angel-ambassador, and the speciousness of his commission, Adam declines to recognise his pretensions; and with scant courtesy tells him to be gone. Thus foiled in his first attempt, the Fiend turns, in angry mood, towards Eve; but concealing his wrath under a cloak of official indignation and sympathy with humanity, expresses his fear lest Adam's disloyalty to his sovereign King may entail God's righteous wrath, and bring upon them both untold ills. With words of flattery, and specious promises of increased mind-power, the Fiend inflames the woman's weaker intellect, until at last, led on by his crafty lies, she partakes of the deadly fruit. No sooner has she yielded to the Fiend's subtle influence and specious arguments, than the pledge which he had given her of celestial light is apparently fulfilled. A wondrous change comes over her. Her sight is able now to pierce even through the starry Spheres, surrounding the Earth, and to see and hear the worship of Cherubim and Seraphim within the concave of the Empyrean.

While under the spell of this illusion, the Fiend urges her to persuade her lord and spouse to retract the graceless and disloyal words that he had uttered and do his Sovereign's bidding. Thus urged, and thinking only of their mutual weal, she approaches

Analysis of Cædmon's "Fall of Man" 123

Adam, bearing in her hand the luscious fruit, and implores him to taste. To add to the force of her words, she assures him, that now she is convinced that the Messenger is, in very deed, God's Angel, for he had fulfilled his pledge to her of greater Light and wider range of Vision, and that no longer did she doubt that the fruit was sent by God with His command that they should eat.

At length, overborne by the Woman's pleading, Adam yields,

. . . and all his heart
Went forth to do her will.

His errand accomplished, the Fiend indulges in merriment at the success of his mission and, with a stroke of sarcasm, which none but a demon could have conceived, promises to take the thanks of them both to his liege lord.

This section is brought to a close with a soliloquy, addressed by the Fiend to his lord and Master, Satan, and his return to Hell, to report the successful termination of his fiendish adventure.

In the next section the poet describes the events immediately subsequent to the Fall. No sooner has the Fiend left the Man and the Wife to their ruined lives, than the subtle spell, which his devilcraft had cast over the mind of the Woman, is

broken ; the glorious Light within disappears ; the wide-reaching vision of the Universe gives place to normal sight ; and the charm of the intensification of the power of hearing and of others of the senses, is seen to have been subjective only,—an illusion of the brain. Disenchanted, and plunged in deepest remorse for having listened to the artful lies of the tempter, at times, they bend the knee to God in heartfelt contrition, beseeching the All-Merciful that they, alone, may bear the consequences of their guilt ; at times, many a word of sadness passes between them,

. . . for each shared deeply
In the other's woe.

We may notice, in passing, that in this section of the poem, in which Cædmon describes the remorse and shame of the guilty pair, there are instances of the most exquisitely chaste pieces of dialogue to be found in any early English work. For example, after Adam has expressed his bitter sorrow for what has happened, and his fears for the future, Eve replies :

Thú meaht hit me wítan
Wine mín adam
Wórdum thínúm
Hit the théah wyr̥s ne maeg
On thínúm hyge hréowan
Thonne hit me æt heortan deth.

It is impossible to read the Anglo-Saxon of such a passage as this, even at this far off day, without feeling how perfectly the soft music and plaintive rhythm of the verse harmonise with the sentiment expressed. Even in a modern English rendering, these lines lose but little of their beauty, and may be taken as a good illustration of our meaning :

"Well mayest thou upbraid me as thou dost,
O Adam, my belovéd spouse, and yet
Believe me, that thyself canst not bewail
More bitterly the outcome of this deed
Than I do in my heart."

But to return. At length, in shame and sorrow, the Man and the Woman seek the shelter of a neighbouring grove, and there, seated apart, await in silent dread, the coming of their King, and His sure sentence of full-merited doom.

After many days, the holy God descends to Earth, and walks at evening-time amid the glories of the Garden. No sooner do the Man and his sorrow-stricken spouse hear the voice of their Heavenly Chief, than they seek in conscious guilt the recesses of a deep-hidden cavern. Summoned by the Deity, Adam approaches his Maker, acknowledging his sense of woe and shame, and in answer to the questioning of his Sovereign Lord, acknowledges that, forgetful of divine Love, he had taken the deadly

fruit from the hand of his virgin Wife, and had eaten in violation of his Lord's command. Eve, to the close questioning of her God, replies in deepest shame, that she was beguiled by

. . . artful words of fairest import

and ate the fruit.

And so the fifth section ends.

The doom of the Fiend, in the similitude of the Worm, is then pronounced; the Man and the Woman hear the sentence of their exile, and bending their steps from Paradise seek

Another home, a realm more joyless far

than their native Paradise.

In the seventh and last section, the gates of Eden are closed behind the guilty pair. An Archangel, with flaming sword, guards the sacred enclosure to bar their return, and although Almighty God leaves them the radiant stars and the treasures of the Earth and Sea for their comfort and sustenance, they are sent forth to toil, to suffer, and to die.

If we consider this poem simply as the first strain of sacred song in Christianised England of which we have any record, written in an age of general illiteracy, and when few even of the clergy could be styled scholars in any real sense of the word, its

high literary merit is remarkable. But we can go farther than this. Cædmon's work is not only meritorious by comparison with the rudeness of the age in which it was produced, but, intrinsically, it takes high rank in our literature. It is true that the poem contains but few similes; still the same may be said of the *Beowulf*, and of Anglo-Saxon poetry in general. In chasteness of diction, however, in smoothness of versification, in purity of thought, in the human sympathy which breathes forth in every line, no less than in the invention of incident, the arrangement of episodes, and the dignified tone of the ending, it is worthy of the high place which, in days gone by, it held in the estimation of the Venerable Bede, of King Alfred, and of the learned Dujon; and which it still holds in the heart of every lover of Anglo-Saxon poetry of the present day. Indeed, as we shall subsequently see, the poem, as a whole, will bear favourable comparison, in many respects, with the more elaborate epic of the erudite Secretary of the Commonwealth, and in more than one passage, evinces a chaste and delicate line of thought, while the corresponding passages in Milton, cannot fail to displease by their coarseness and repulsiveness.

CHAPTER IV.

Cædmon's Poem and Milton's Epic, a Comparative Study—Prologue and Creation.

IN the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, when invoking the aid of the Heavenly Muse, Milton expresses the opinion that his "adventrous song" is a unique production in literature, involving,

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,

and it is beyond doubt that he fully believed in his own estimate of the sacred epic.

Nor do we propose to call this statement in question, as it must be acknowledged that, in a certain sense and under certain limitations, Milton's description of his own work is a true one.

That there existed a number of dramas and poems on the same subject as *Paradise Lost*, even at the time when the poet made the first rough outline of his future work [1639-42], and still more so when he began the actual writing of his epic [1658], has

been conclusively proved by quite a number of distinguished editors and critics of Milton's works; especially, by the Rev. Henry John Todd* in the Introduction to his *variorum* Edition, where he enumerates the claims of some thirty authors, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch, to the credit of having, probably or possibly, contributed something to the conception, the plan, or the execution of Milton's great poem. Voltaire, in his *Essay on Epic Poetry*, originally written in English [1727], during his stay in England, was the first to suggest that Milton had borrowed his "original" from a Scriptural drama that he had witnessed while in Italy [1638-9], entitled *Adamo*, written by a certain Giovanni Battista Andreini, the son of an Italian actress, and known, in both Italy and France, as a writer of comedies and religious poems. This hint of Voltaire's, led to the opening up of one of those, so-called, literary questions that, now and again, have diverted the attention of the scholar from the study of true literature into channels of worthless speculation and useless criticism. Indeed, for many a long year, the question of the particular author to whom Milton may have been indebted for hints and fancies in his *Paradise Lost*, continued to be a favourite topic of research; and unfortunately, even

* *Vide* Vol. I., pp. 230-270, Edition 1852.

at this late day, the question, thus mooted, has not received its final *quietus*.

Leaving out of consideration this unedifying question of Milton's possible obligations to previous authors, and passing by even the perfectly legitimate literary question of Milton's "borrowings," and the sources of his poetic similes, illustrations, and images, all that we propose to do is to consider the only two works, written anterior to Milton's time, which can, by any stretch of the imagination, be compared, as literary works, with the celebrated epic of the Latin Secretary of the Commonwealth; we refer to the *Divina Commedia* of Dante and Cædmon's "Fall of Man."

That Milton was thoroughly familiar with the immortal work of the great Italian poet there can be no doubt, both from the fact of his well known familiarity with Italian literature, and from his evident "borrowings" from Dante. In the lines in which he describes Hell, as

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, *hope never comes*
That comes to all,

we are, at once, reminded of the terrible inscription over the entrance to Inferno,

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate."

So, again, the influence of Dante's healthier and less materialistic views on the punishments of Hell, as expressed in his *Inferno*, and his more philosophical, or psychological treatment of the subject, can be traced in many a passage of *Paradise Lost*, where the Italian's more metaphysical conception crops out quaintly from beneath the puritan theology of Milton's day. But granting all this, there is no "copying," no "original," but simply a suspicion of Dante's higher philosophy, flavouring, so to speak, the dry theology of the puritan poet.

With regard to Cædmon, however, the case is somewhat different. His "Fall of Man" is the only poem, so far discovered, that could be supposed for a single moment to have influenced Milton's brilliant and powerful imagination. As we have already seen, the discovery of this long lost manuscript, and its publication by Junius at Amsterdam in 1655, render it possible that Milton may have seen the work of the Anglo-Saxon poet, prior to the commencement of his *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, if we take into consideration Milton's insatiable appetite for reading, and his keen interest in all that was passing in the literary world of his day, it amounts to a moral certainty that the publication of such a literary curiosity as the long lost manuscript of Cædmon, must have found its way into Milton's quiet home in Petty

France, and have been read to him by one of his acquaintances, if not by Junius himself.

However this may be, the two poems are sufficiently similar in plot and mode of treatment, to indicate a common origin ; and sufficiently dissimilar, to warrant the opinion that Milton, even if he had seen the *Paraphrasis*, was but slightly, if at all, influenced by the perusal of the Anglo-Saxon poem. At the same time, the points of coincidence between the two poems, with regard both to the plot, the incidents, the characters, and even some of the speeches, are as remarkable as the points of divergence ; and hence the two poems offer a most interesting field for critical comparison.

In order, however, to appreciate the true *status* of Cædmon's verse and Milton's epic, we must bear in mind the fact that Cædmon was not, so far as we know, either a trained scholar or a trained theologian ; and we must suppose, if Beda's narrative is to be taken literally, that his theological learning and poetic skill, from what source soever derived, were acquired with the easy assimilation of genius. Milton, on the other hand, was a scholar in every sense of the word. Educated at one of the two most celebrated seats of learning in England, and endowed by nature with talents of the highest order, he became Latinist, Hellenist, Hebraist, a master of

Italian, and, like all great scholars, was endowed, in a very high degree, with the faculty of reproducing at will, the results of his wide reading. As a consequence, *Paradise Lost* is, perhaps, the most *learned* poem in the English language; while Cædmon's "Fall of Man," although it contains, like *Paradise Lost*, innumerable evidences of an intimate knowledge of the Bible, of Rabbinical writings, and of early Christian traditions, is charmingly free from every vestige of that ponderous learning which is a stumbling-block to the averagely intelligent reader of Milton.

Although, in this study, we propose to consider the works of Cædmon and Milton, not from a religious stand-point, but as literature, pure and simple, still, we may say in passing, that the theology of Cædmon is the healthy Christianity of the early Anglo-Saxon Church, and not, like Milton's, the peculiar and disenchanting theology of quasi-Arianism or of seventeenth century Puritanism.

But before entering upon our comparative study of the two works, it is essential to have a clear idea of the "setting," or environment, or background, of Milton's epic. We have already shown, in the last chapter, the "setting" of Cædmon's "Fall of Man," and we depicted, in a series of diagrams, the various changes in Cædmon's portrayal of infinite space

that must have passed before the poet's imagination as the poem gradually unfolded itself before him.

And here we are met by the first, most striking, coincidence in the two poems. Milton's "setting" is identical with that of Cædmon's. Milton pictures infinite space as divided into two concaves, or *bōsmas*, precisely as Cædmon had done a thousand years before; and as in the case of Cædmon, so here, we are not left to our own unaided fancy to picture the poet's setting, but have Milton's own descriptions to guide us, and this, not only as regards the two concaves of original space or infinitude, but also as regards the further development of the diagram rendered necessary by the exigencies of the epic.

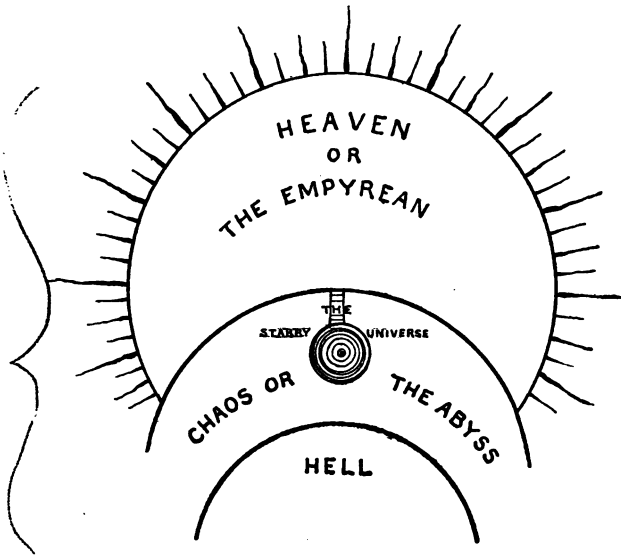
The diagram, on the page opposite, represents infinite space as conceived by both Cædmon and Milton alike.

The upper concave Milton describes as,

. . . the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire ;

and of the Angelic denizens of this Empyrean, the poet tells us, that

. . . on such day
As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal
host
Of Angels, by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared
Under their hierarchs in orders bright.
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons, 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees.



In the description of the wars in Heaven, when the rebel hosts of Satan had been finally overcome, Milton explains that the

. . . crystal wall of Heaven . . . opening wide,
 Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
 Into the wasteful Deep.

This "wasteful Deep," into which the rebel
 Angels are hurled, lightning-struck, is Chaos,

. . . a dark
 Illimitable ocean, without bound.

And in another passage, Milton describes it as a

. . . vast immeasurable Abyss,
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
 And surging waves, as mountains to assault
 Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

Into this Abyss, the rebels are forced to headlong
 ruin, when,

. . . confounded Chaos roared
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall.

. . .
 Nine days they fell ;

. . . Hell at last,
 Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed,—
 Hell, their fit habitation.

In these passages, we have a clear-cut outline of
 Cædmon's three concaves, the Empyrean, Chaos,
 and Hell.

Nor is the Miltonic conception of the Starry Universe any less distinct, or less picturable to the mind, than the Cædmonic.

Milton tells us,

As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild
Reigned where these heavens now roll, where Earth
now rests.

But after the Creation of the World, and when Satan, bent on his mission of demon-revenge, had passed upwards through the Gates of Hell, and had arrived in the uppermost stratum of Chaos, Milton tells us that "the sacred influence of light" dawns on the Arch-fiend :

. . . and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the *bosom* of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire.

At this point in his journey, Satan,

Weights his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit,

And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.

That the "World" referred to in these lines is the Starry Universe, as in Cædmon, and not the tiny

globe which we inhabit, is made perfectly clear by Milton's own verse, even if we had no other evidence to guide us.

We have already seen that the only system of Astronomy in repute in Cædmon's day was the Ptolemaic. According to this system, there were eight, and only eight, Spheres, the outermost one being the Firmament or Sphere of the Fixed Stars. But during the Middle Ages, in order to explain certain astronomical phenomena which the eight Spheres failed to account for, two additional Spheres were added, viz., the "Crystalline Sphere" and the "Primum Mobile," or "first moved." The Ptolemaic system, thus improved, was adopted in the thirteenth century by Alphonso X. of Castile, king and astronomer, and since that time, has commonly been styled the Alphonsine. It is this system that Milton adopts in *Paradise Lost*; although a few passages can be pointed out in which he seems to hesitate between the old and the new—the Alphonsine, and the Copernican. But, as a rule, it is the Alphonsine that he accepts, perhaps as being more poetical and hence better adapted to the requirements of his epic. In one passage, where he is describing the futile attempt of hypocrites to reach the Empyrean, he enumerates the Alphonsine Spheres in their usual order and by their accustomed names :

They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that first moved.

A few instances of Milton's frequent reference to this, now antiquated, system of astronomy will suffice. When speaking of the Angelic hosts, he describes them as dwelling

. . . in Heaven, above the Starry Sphere,

where the "Starry Sphere," is the Firmament or Sphere of the Fixed Stars according to the Alphonsine system.

In the following extract, the Ptolemaic idea of concentric Spheres, enclosed the one within the other, is clearly depicted :

Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe
Of *this round World*, whose *first convex divides*
The luminous inferior Orbs enclosed
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
It seemed ; now seems a boundless continent.

After Satan has reached the opening at the zenith of the *Primum Mobile*, immediately beneath the Gates of Heaven, Milton tells us that the Fiend,

. . . without longer pause
Down right into *the World's first region* throws

His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
 Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
 Stars distant, but nigh-hand seemed other worlds,—

a passage that would be unintelligible apart from a knowledge of Milton's astronomical tenets.

The imagery used by Cædmon in describing the pathway of communication between the Empyrean and the visible Universe, reappears in Milton, and the illumination in the Junian manuscript, depicting the celestial stairway, would be equally appropriate in a manuscript of *Paradise Lost*.*

As the Arch-Fiend nears the confines of that Heaven from which he had fallen, lightning-like, into the Deep, he gains the first glimpse of the changed conditions of his former home :

. . . he descries,

Ascending by degrees magnificent
 Up to the wall of Heaven, a structure high ;
 At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
 The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
 With frontispiece of diamond and gold
 Embellished ; thick with sparkling orient gems
 The portal shone, inimitable on Earth
 By model, or by shading pencil drawn.

Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,
 That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,

* *Vide* page 112.

Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this World at once.

The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss ;
Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the Earth,—a passage wide,

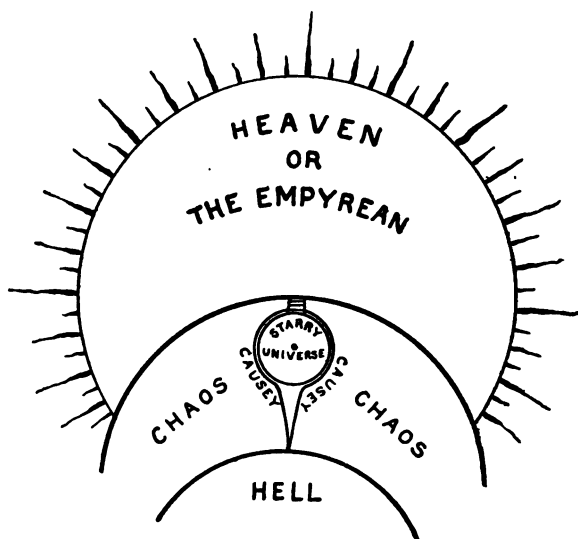
that is, a passage opening at the zenith of the World
or Starry Universe and leading down through the
ten Spheres to Earth ; or as Milton describes it
later on,

A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear
Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way
Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest
Powdered with stars.

But one point remains to be noticed before we
leave this part of our subject, and enter upon our
comparative study of the general treatment of the
Epic of the Fall by our two poets, Cædmon and
Milton.

It will be remembered that in Cædmon's simple,
though artistic narrative, the Fiend, on the success-
ful termination of his enterprise, returns to his
sovereign lord in Hell to relate the circumstances
and result of his demon adventure ; and apparently

retraces his steps along the same pathway and in the same supernatural manner by which he had journeyed thither. In Milton's more elaborate climax to this part of the narrative, Satan finds that his grim, bastard colleagues, Sin and Death, have built an adamantine bridge or causey, connecting Earth



with Hell, just as the jewelled stairway, constructed by the Deity, connected Earth with the Empyrean.

Accordingly, this masterpiece of fiendish engineering requires a final change in our diagram of infinite space as conceived by Milton, and we shall henceforth

have, not only the three concaves of Heaven, Chaos, and Hell, and the Starry Universe with its stairway to the Empyrean, but in addition, a weird structure conceived and fashioned by devil-skill to render more easy the descent to Hell of the human race, and to facilitate the intercourse of the demons between Hell and the Earth.

We are now in a position, with the aid of the diagram given here and those in the preceding chapter, to compare the creations of the two poets,—the chaste phantasies of Cædmon and the more brilliant imaginings of the blind bard; and if we mistake not, each version will be found to aid in the understanding of the other, and to help to fix the other more firmly and distinctly, as a picture, in the mind of the reader.

In our analysis of Cædmon, we divided his poem into seven sections, (1) The Prologue, comprising a statement of the theme in brief; (2) The Creation; (3) The Account of the Rebellion and Expulsion in full; (4) The Council in Hell and departure of Hell's Delegate; (5) The Temptation and Fall; (6) The events subsequent to the Fall, and anterior to the Sentence; and (7) The Sentence and Banishment.

These, being essential parts of the poetic framework of the *Epic of the Fall of Man*, are, of neces-

sity, common alike to Cædmon and Milton; but while the Anglo-Saxon poet adopts the natural or chronological order of events, as given above, Milton adopts a more artificial arrangement which, in many ways, was, doubtless, better adapted to his grander and more elaborate design. In Milton, there is a Prologue or Introduction similar to that in Cædmon, and presenting, in brief, a statement of the theme of the poem; but the next two sections Milton omits for the time being, and plunges at once "into the midst of things," as he himself expresses it in his "argument," laying the opening scene of his poem in Hell, and describing the plenary Council in Pandemonium—events which in Cædmon form the fourth section of the Epic. In the fifth, sixth, and seventh sections, Milton adopts the same chronological order as Cædmon, and hence the second and third sections are the only ones that demand our attention here.

What we have called the *second* section, viz., the history of Creation; and the *third* section, viz., the account, *in extenso*, of the Rebellion in Heaven and Expulsion of the rebel Angels, are placed by Milton after the narrative of the arrival of Satan within the precincts of the Garden of Eden, which ends the Fourth Book of *Paradise Lost*. It is not till we come to the Ninth Book that the direct narrative, broken

off at the end of the Fourth Book, is resumed and the natural order maintained to the end of the poem.

This break in the narrative, at the point where Satan arrives in Eden, is peculiar to Milton, and deeply interesting, as it discloses some slight insight into Milton's method. Having determined in his own mind, to plunge "into the midst of things," and having, with fine, dramatic effect, introduced the hero of his epic as lying in a deadly stupor in deepest Hell, it was necessary for Milton to devise some way to account, to his readers, for the uncere-
monious expulsion and dread punishment of the angelic legions, and to explain the full *raison d'être* of the excursion of Satan to Earth. Milton, accordingly, represents the Deity as cognisant of Satan's journey and of its devilish object, and tells how He despatched Raphael to Eden to warn Man of his imminent peril. The arrival of this Heavenly messenger gives Milton the occasion to introduce the history of the Wars in Heaven; the expulsion of the Arch-Fiend and his followers; and to describe the creation of the Starry Universe. This ingenious arrangement of the narrative, enabled Milton to make a telling climax and anticlimax, thus giving additional interest to the events leading up to the second climax, viz., the final accomplishment of the

Fall of Man, and to the second anticlimax, the banishment from Eden.

The opening strain that falls from the lips of the Anglo-Saxon monk is an ascription of praise to the Highest :

Most right it is to chant the ceaseless praise
Of Him who guards the starry heights of bliss
And ever, with enraptured hearts, adore
The Glory-King of Heaven's Angelic host.

High in His Majesty, with Justice clothed,
Omnipotent to do His Sovereign will,
He ruled the Heavenly concaves, which at first,
By power divine, were stretched out far and wide
Throughout unbounded space, celestial Home
Of those who guard the spirits of the just.

In Him alone, the Lord Eternal, dwells
Might uncreated. He is Head supreme
Of all exalted creatures. He alone
Knew no beginning and shall have no end,
Holding for evermore Almighty sway
O'er Thrones and Principalities and Powers.

Milton, following classical methods and classical models, which were the strict fashion in the literature of the age, begins *Paradise Lost* with an invocation of the Muse :

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste

Brought death into the World and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos ; "

. I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

After his prologue, Cædmon gives in brief, a poetic forecast of his theme, and tells how accursèd pride moved the soul of the great Archangel to cause rebellion in Heaven :

No deadly sin or lurking, traitorous thought
Had dared assault their hearts ; in peace they lived
With their all-glorious Chief, and naught save Truth
And holy Rectitude upreared its head
Within the sacred battlements of Heaven
Till he, who lifted high above his peers,
The Guardian Angel of the Angelic tribes,
Fell through accursèd pride. Full many then,
Holding in light esteem celestial Love,
Forgot their highest Good. Presumptuous,
They thought to war against Almighty God
And erelong share, with High Omnipotence,

The unfading glory of that peaceful realm
Its sceptre, crown, and bright seraphic throng.

Vain was their hope, delusive was their dream ;
For in the stead of rebel victory and princely power,
Hatred and pride and racking pain befell
The rebel host, and such a rancorous mind
As he possessed who first moved discontent
And horrid discord.

And so in Milton, the poet himself tells us in his
“ argument ” that “ the First Book proposes, first in
brief, the whole subject ” ; and he carries out his
design in the form of a query addressed to the
Muse.

. . . what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt ?
The infernal Serpent ; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring,
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed, and, with *ambitious aim*
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

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Then was God wroth with that re

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

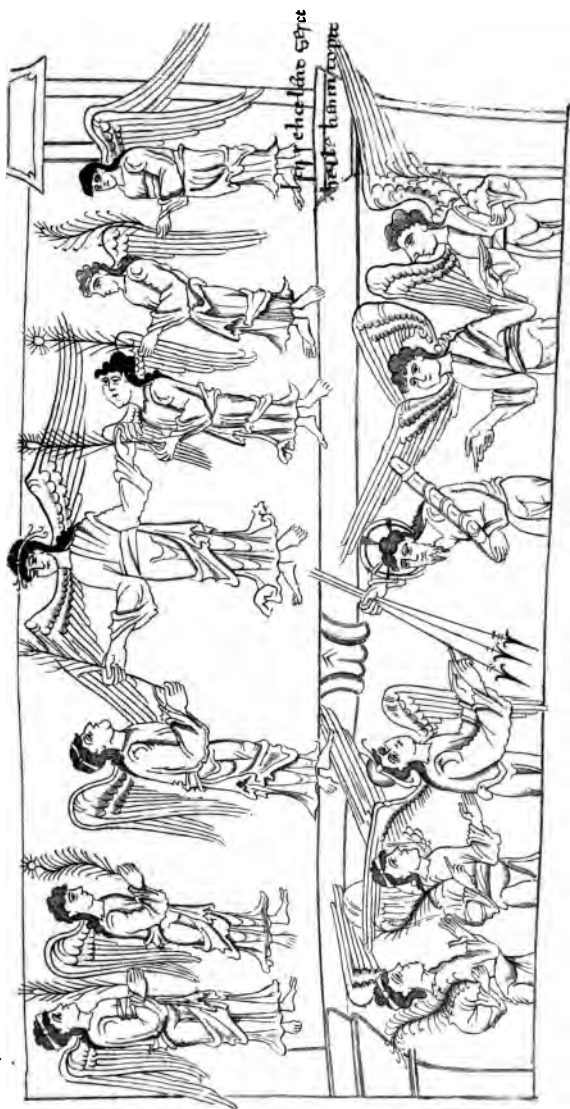
In this opening section or Introduction to the poem, Cædmon enlarges somewhat on the subject of the treason which had long been smouldering in the heart of the Arch-Traitor, and its final outburst in open rebellion ; and the few words of bitter disloyalty which Cædmon ascribes to the "Angel of Presumption," as he styles Satan, are truly grand in their defiance :

Then the Archangel spake,
His soul inflamed with dark, malicious thoughts :
" In the North part of God's sublime domain
Will I a kingdom found, a palace rear,
Such is my sovereign will."

The Anglo-Saxon poet brings this first section to a close by telling, in brief, the discomfiture and punishment of the rebel Angels :

Then was God wroth
With that rebellious host, whom at the first,
With Heavenly glory and Angelic mien
He had endowed. Forthwith, in ire, He formed
A place of banishment, an exile-house,
Filled with deep anguish and with hellish groans

And direful punishments ; a fell retreat
For those who faithless proved to their high trust.
Deep was the torture-house and void of joys ;
Home of perpetual Night, with sulphur charged,
With fire and cold intense, with lurid flame
And black Tartarean smoke. The cold, He bade,
And direful flames increase a thousandfold
That by alternate tortures Hell itself
Might be henceforth doubly unbearable.
Then, through the rebel host could nought be heard
But horrid blasphemies and bitter cries
Against their righteous King, for taking thus
Grim retribution on His fallen foes ;
And in fierce raging mood each rebel swear
To wrest the Kingdom from Almighty God.
But when the Archangel's Sovereign high upreared
His mighty arm against that traitor band,
Their haughty boast deceived them, for the King
Sent terror in their hearts, and prone they fell
Powerless to fight. For in His wrath He bent
Their vengeful pride, stripped them of might and state
And hoped-for triumph. Then as abject thralls,
Joyless and shorn of Heaven's effulgent crown,
They stood examples of presumptuous pride.
In purpose stern and with relentless hand
The Almighty strongly grasped and might have crushed
And utterly destroyed His foe. In lieu
He seized the realms and stately palaces
Their hands had reared, and from His Kingdom hurled
The faithless tribe and sent them wailing forth
Down the dark, steep, unutterable path
That leads to Hell. No longer might be heard
The scornful vaunt ; for now their grandeur turned



*But when the Archangel's Sovereign high upreared
His mighty arm against that traitor band,
Their haughty boast deceived them.*

To deepest infamy, their beauteous forms
By sin defaced, they urged their darksome way
To darker punishment. In torments dire
Accursed they dwelt. No longer did they raise
The loud derisive laugh ; for ceaseless woe,
Deep racking pain, grief unassuagable
And hydra-headed torture, all around,
Enthroned in blackest darkness, mocked their cries ;
Just retribution for the unholy war
They thought to wage against Almighty God.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton passes by these preliminary events in his Prologue, and plunges *in medias res*, depicting his hero, together with his confederates, as "lying in the burning lake thunderstruck and astonished" after their fall from the Empyrean ; and he reserves all of this part of the narrative, viz., the incipency of the rebellion in Heaven and the expulsion of the rebel hosts, to be related in full by Raphael, later on in the Epic,* when the Archangel gives at Adam's request, a circumstantial description of the wars in the Empyrean, ending in Satan's defeat and summary ruin. To this part of Milton's narrative we shall refer in our comparison of corresponding passages when we come to Cædmon's fuller narrative in what we have styled the third section.

And now, that broad domain of Heaven's fair realm,
The fairest and most powerful to move

* *Vide* Book V, l. 561, etc.

Rebellious lust, in lonely grandeur stood ;
 Its palaces so richly wrought and fair,
 Conceived and fashioned by rebellious skill,
 Stood tenantless. Then thought the mighty God
 How, once again, those bright Angelic seats
 And beauteous realms, created by His will,
 He might repeople with a better race
 And nobler, than the vaunting myrmidons
 Who lightly forfeited their heaven-born right.
 Then Holy God resolved, beneath the vast,
 Celestial firmament (tho' still within
 His boundless realms), to form a beauteous World
 With overarching skies and waters wide
 And earthly creatures filled, in place of those
 Whom headlong He had hurled from His abode.

So sings Cædmon, in the opening theme of his poem,
 the creation of the Starry Universe and of Man.

In *Paradise Lost*, Adam beseeches Raphael, if it
 be permissible, to relate,

How first began this Heaven which we behold
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
 Innumerable ; and this which yields or fills
 All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,
 Embracing round this florid Earth ; what cause
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
 Through all eternity, so late to build
 In Chaos ;

to which the "affable Archangel" replies :



*And sent them wailing forth
Down the dark, steep, unutterable path
That leads to Hell.*

"Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven"

Fell with his flaming legions through the Deep
Into his place, and the great Son returned
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake :

. 'I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose
Self-lost, and in a moment will create
Another world ; out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here, *till, by degrees of merit raised,*
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried,
And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven
to Earth.'"

A very important point of divergence between the two poems occurs in this part of the narrative. In Cædmon it is the Deity, who with celestial majesty, goes forth into Chaos to create the Universe ; and in this, the poet is in perfect accord with both accounts of the Creation comprised in the first two chapters of the book Genesis :

Here the eternal Lord, Head of creation,
In the beginning shaped the Universe,
The sky upreared, and this fair spacious Earth
By His strong might was stablished evermore.

Milton, on the other hand, with his peculiar anthropomorphic ideas of the divine Paternity, represents the Father as commissioning His Son, as a celestial subject or prime minister, to accomplish His behests :

“And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform, speak thou, and be it done !
My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
I send along ; ride forth and bid the Deep
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.”

We do not bring this forward from a theological standpoint, but from a purely poetical point of view. It seems to us to mar the dignity of the theme, for the Omnipotent to send forth an inferior, although delegated with sovereign power to perform the marvels of such almightiness.

It is in this connection, that there occurs that fine passage, to which we have before alluded, in which Cædmon describes primeval Chaos :

As yet, was nought beneath God's radiant Throne
But gloom as dark as in the cavern reigns,
And this wide-spread Abyss stood deep and dim
In idle uselessness, distasteful sight
To Him the source of all-creative power.
The mighty King, in mind resolved, beheld
The joyless shade and saw the lowering cloud
Lie swart and waste, like an eternal sea

Of blackest Night, beneath the effulgent glow
Of Light ineffable ; till by the Word
And fiat of the King this World appeared.

The thought is the same in Milton. As the Son,
accompanied by the angelic hosts, approaches the
bounds of the Empyrean,

. . . Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word,
And Spirit coming to create new worlds.
On Heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable Abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild.

Having passed in celestial state,

Far into Chaos and the World unborn ;
the Vicegerent of the Almighty,

Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things.
One foot he centered, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure.

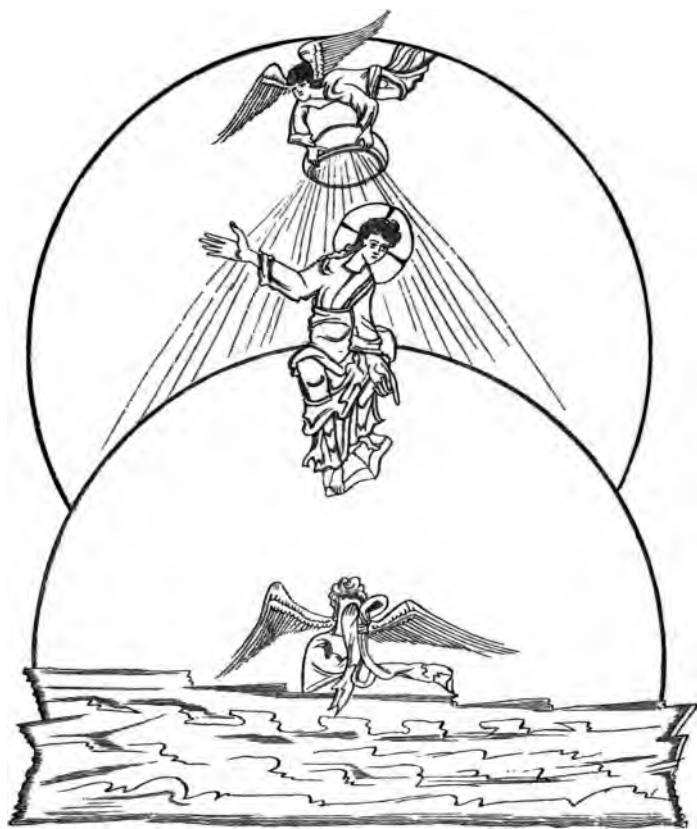
In drawing their grand, poetic panorama of Creation, both Cædmon and Milton follow so closely the well-known artistic lines of the Hebrew cosmogony,

that it will be unnecessary to do more, in this connection, than adduce a few passages which will bring out in bold relief the strong and weak points of the two versions.

The following passage in the Anglo-Saxon poem, descriptive of the creation of Light is as chaste and artistic, as the Anglo-Saxon poet's previous description of Chaos is weird and realistic :

Then o'er the Deep
Was swiftly borne, on bright and radiant wing,
The Spirit of the Lord. The mighty King
Bade Light come forth far o'er the spacious Deep,
And instantly His high behest was done,
And holy Light shone brightly o'er the waste
Fulfilling His command.

In triumph then
He severed Light from Darkness and to both
The Lord of Life gave name ; and holy Light,
First born of all created things, beauteous
And bright, above all creatures fair
He called the Day. Then was the Lord well-pleased
With this beginning of creative force,
For now He saw the black and swarthy shade
Subsiding o'er the deep and wide Abyss.
Then time passed o'er the quivering face of Earth,
And Even first, at God's command, dispelled
The radiant Day, till onward rolled the dark
And murky cloud which God Himself called Night,
Chasing away the Even's twilight gleam.
Thus, sundered by Almighty power, they stand



. . . Then o'er the Deep
Was swiftly borne, on bright and radiant wing,
The spirit of the Lord.



Subject to Heaven's decree, and evermore
Have done their Maker's will.

This passage, to our taste, is even finer than the
corresponding passage in Milton :

Darkness profound
Covered the Abyss ; but on the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass.

“Let there be Light!” said God ; and forthwith Light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the Deep, and from her native East
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud—for yet the Sun
Was not ; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourned the while. God saw the Light was good ;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided : Light the Day, and Darkness Night,
He named. Thus was the first Day even and morn.

The description of the sublime work of the second
Day of Creation, when the Firmament was upraised,
is of especial interest as proving, by direct comparison
of corresponding passages, the identity of the
astronomical views of the two poets. Cædmon tells
us,

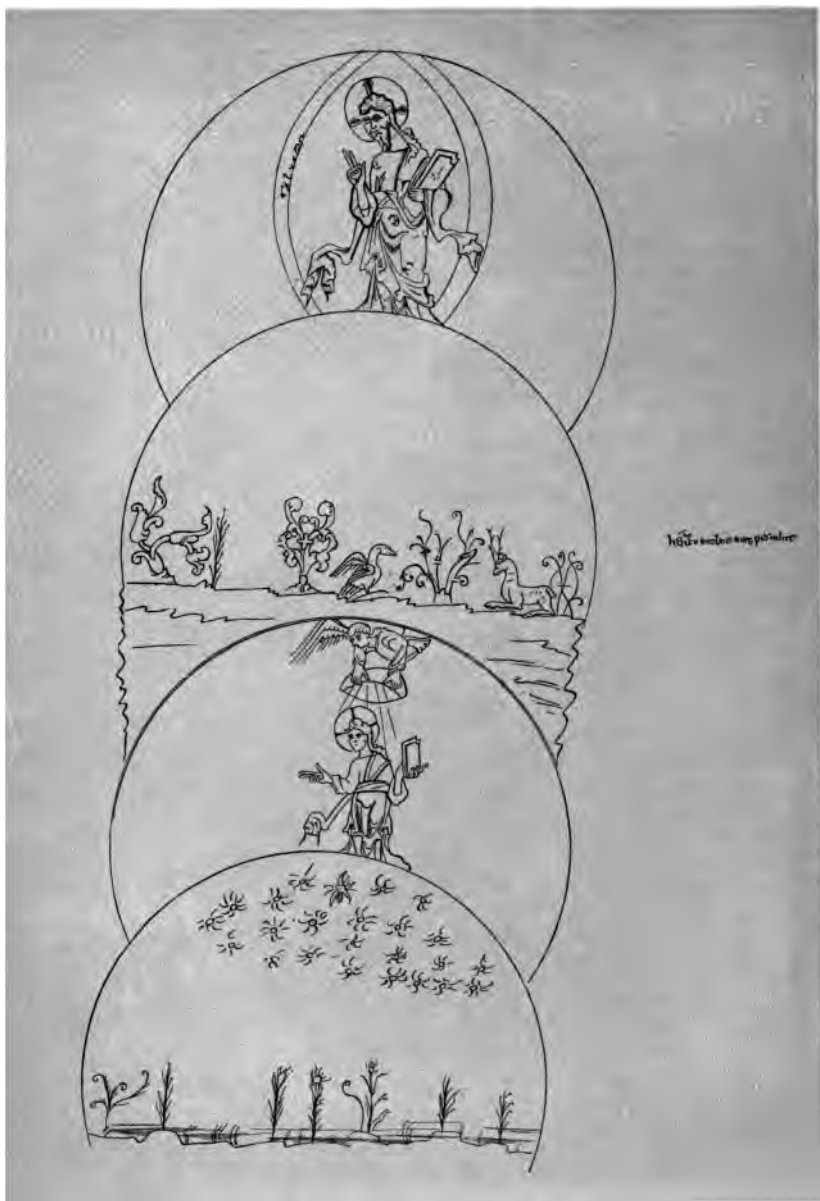
Pale, heavenly Light,
Succeeding Earth's first Darkness, ushered in
The second Day. Then bade the Almighty King,
Forth from the bosom of the ocean flood,

Rise the bright framework of the glistening stars.
 On every side the waters backward rolled,
 And instantly, obeying God's command,
 The mighty concave o'er the Earth rose high
 A solid Firmament ; and the dark waves
 Beneath the lofty vault of Heaven were reft
 From those above, that all might dwell secure
 Beneath God's wide, far-stretching canopy.

In this, and also in the following extract from Milton, the term " Heaven " is used to designate the Sphere of the Fixed Stars or Firmament, and not the Empyrean.

Again God said, " Let there be firmament
 Amid the waters, and let it divide
 The waters from the waters ! " and God made
 The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused
 In circuit to the uttermost convex
 Of this great round—partition firm and sure,
 The waters underneath from those above
 Dividing ; *for as Earth, so he the World*
 Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
 Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
 Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame :
 And *Heaven* he named the Firmament. So Even
 And Morning chorus sang the second Day.

This passage, which is one of eminent note in the study of *Paradise Lost*, leaves little room for doubt



*Then bade the Almighty King,
 Forth from the bosom of the ocean flood,
 Rise the bright framework of the glistening stars.*

It is impossible to refrain from admiring the dainty touch in the picture of the Anglo-Saxon poet where he tells us ;

For as he softly slept, the Almighty took
A rib from Adam's side, *nor caused him pain*
Since from the wound there flowed no drop of blood,
And therewith fashioned He a woman fair.

Indeed, as a matter purely of poetic taste, we prefer this passage greatly to the crude, though more realistic, delineation of the scene in Milton, where the Almighty takes,

. . . a rib, *with cordial spirits warm,*
And life-blood streaming fresh.

The closing incidents, in this section of the *Epic of the Fall*,—the greater benediction of the Deity, and the threefold mandate, so delightfully told in Cædmon, do not seem to have aroused the imagination of Milton, since here, he rises little, if at all, above the mediocrity of the Scriptural original of his story, and falls far short of it, in simplicity of thought and diction.

In Cædmon we read,

Then the Creator blessed
His latest triumph of creative might
With blessings large, and words full fraught with peace.
He blessed and said : "Teem now and multiply,



He blessed and said : " Them now and multiply,"

Fill with your heaven-born kin the verdant Earth ;
To you I give dominion o'er the Flood,
O'er all this vast creation sole control,
And in perpetual joy your days shall pass.
Hear, then, the mandate of Omnipotence ;
Whate'er the Ocean holds, whate'er the Earth
Brings forth of fowl or cattle or wild beast,
Whatever treads the Land or is endued
With mystic life, e'en whatsoever moves
Throughout the whale-path of the mighty Deep
All shall pay homage and obey your will."

Raphael, in the most prosaic verse, tells how the Deity,

. . . then blessed mankind, and said,
" Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth ;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on the Earth ! "

This absence of poetic inspiration, is equally apparent in Milton's rendition of the divine mandate to abstain from the forbidden fruit. In the Anglo-Saxon poem the writer represents the Deity as issuing the command :

|| "All other trees enjoy, but from that one
Strictly abstain and evermore beware
Its luring fruit, lest it become erelong
Unholy source of still unholier lust."
They bowed their heads in deepest reverence
Before their Heavenly King and praised His name

Yet not till the Creator, from his work
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode,
Thence to behold this new-created World,
The addition of his empire, how it showed
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
Followed with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonies. The Earth, the Air
Resounded, ...
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their stations listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.

From this passage, one might almost imagine that Milton had seen the illumination, or rather drawing, which accompanies this part of the Junian manuscript, where the Deity is represented as having returned to his high abode,

Thence to behold this new-created World.

Neither of these versions of Creation, however chaste or picturesque, can ever be said to rival the fine, old Hebrew legend, in the quaint simplicity of the story, in the strangely philosophical mode of expression in certain parts of the narrative, or to surpass it, in its utter untrustworthiness (if taken literally), as a historical document.

CHAPTER V.

The Fall of the Rebel Angels.

THE action of the epic of *Paradise Lost* opens abruptly, as we have already seen, with the awakening of the rebel Archangel amid

. . . whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

whither he had been

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,

To bottomless perdition.

Here, as he raises his giant form, still half-stupefied by his fall through

. . . hideous ruin and combustion,

he casts his gaze around upon his "horrid crew" as they

Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal.

At this point, the poet gives no detailed account of the treason of the rebel host, or of the wars in



*Then the Creator gazed with blissful joy
Upon the grandeur of His new domain,*

Heaven, reserving these cardinal points in the epic to be related by the Archangel Raphael in the Fifth and Sixth Books of the poem.

Cædmon, however, more naturally, and more in accordance with classical models, (though not with such strong dramatic effect), presents these incidents more in their ideal, chronological order, and opens this part of his narrative with an account of the origin of the ten Angel tribes :

Of old,
The King Eternal by His sovereign Might,
Ordained ten Angel tribes, of equal rank,
With beauty, power, and wisdom richly dower'd
And in this host Angelic, whom in Love
He moulded in His own similitude,
He evermore reposed a holy trust
To work His Will in loving loyalty,
And added of His grace, celestial wit
And bliss unspeakable.

We do not find, in Milton, any such numerical exactitude in his description of the angelic tribes as in Cædmon, but he gives us to understand that there were

. . . mighty regencies
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
In their triple degrees.

Moreover, he depicts the Almighty Himself, when

calling together the heavenly hierarchy to hear His decree with regard to the Messiah, addressing them as,

“ . . . all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,
Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers ; ”

and similarly, Satan is represented as addressing his assembled host under the same titles,

“ Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,”

so that in Milton's imagination these were, unquestionably, the main divisions of the angelic hierarchy. In both versions, however, the authors, following the lines of ancient tradition, have brought into unenviable prominence, either as hero of the Epic, or as chief instigator of the rebellion in Heaven, one of an exclusive caste of Archangels, pre-eminent for his gifts, both physical and intellectual. Cædmon depicts one of this favoured few as,

. . . endowed with peerless might
And arch intelligence. To him alone
The Lord of Hosts gave undisputed sway
O'er all the Angel tribes, exalted high
Above all Principalities and Powers
That next to God Omnipotent he stood,
O'er all created things, lone and supreme.
So heavenly fair and beauteous was his form,
Fashioned by God Himself, that by compare
Less glorious spirits grew dim ; e'en as the stars

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Of God's fixed Sphere pale in the glowing light
Of more resplendent orbs.

Similarly, Milton describes his Archangel, Lucifer :

. . . great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in Heaven ;
His countenance, as the morning star that guides
The starry flock,
. . . brighter once amidst the host
Of Angels than that star the stars among.

He is also described by the poet as :

He, of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power,
In favour, and pre-eminence.

The analysis of the character of this august, spiritual deformity, as depicted respectively by Cædmon and Milton, we shall subsequently take up as a separate comparative study, and, in this connection, shall refer to his personal traits and motives of action, only in so far as may be necessary to render intelligible the main thread of the story.

And here, at the very beginning of the full action of the Epic, we are met by one of the most marked points of divergence between the two narratives.

Cædmon's Archangel of Presumption, seems to have been moved to secret treason, through a false, uncurbed ambition ; nor does the Anglo-Saxon poet

give us any insight into the remote or immediate causes of the Archangel's open rebellion, except the pride of conscious physical perfection, of conscious strength of intellect, and of conscious powers of leadership.

Long had he reigned,
 August Vicegerent of the Heavenly King,
 But for presumptuous Pride which filled his heart
 With dire ingratitude and hostile thoughts
 Against the eternal Throne. Then silent stood
 The great Archangel 'mid the Heavenly choir.
 No grateful anthem rose in meet return
 For gifts divine. No joyful antiphon
 Burst forth responsive from his guilty lips.
 Nor was it hid from God's omniscient eye
 That His Archangel, though beloved still,
 Began to harbour dark, presumptuous thoughts
 And in rebellion rise against his God.

This was the first stage in the apostasy of the great Archangel; when the suggestion of treason had gained entrance into the mind, and had found harbour there, though as yet, the silent, inward incipient thought was unexpressed in open word or deed.

. . . thus he spake
Within his traitorous heart:
 "No longer I,
 With radiant form endowed and heavenly mien

Will brook subjection to a tyrant God
Or be His willing slave. Such power is mine,
Such goodly fellowship, I well believe
'T is greater e'en than God's own following."
With many a word of bold defiance, spake
The Angel of Presumption ; for he hoped
In Heaven to rear a more exalted throne
And stronger, than the seats he now possessed.
Then moved by traitorous guile *he built in thought*
Vast palaces within the Northern realm
And richer Western plains of Paradise,
And evermore he lived in doubtful mood
Whether 't were better in acknowledged war
To risk his high estate, or prostrate fall
Mock-loyal as his God's inferior.

But this smouldering treason, ere long, finds vent
in a bitter soliloquy, leading finally, to open rebellion :

At length the Archangel spake :

“ Why should I toil
Who stand in need of no Superior ?
Marvels as great, ay, greater in renown,
Can I perform than our Omnific Chief ;
A Godlier throne than His and more sublime
Can I unaided rear. Why, as a slave
Dependent on his lord for worthless gifts,
Should I His will obey and bow the head
In abject vassalage as to a King ?
I, too ere long may be a God as He !
Around me, even now, are strong allies
Who will not fail me in the crucial strife ;

Unflinching heroes, warriors of renown,
 Who with accordant and full-tongued assent
 Made me their chosen Chief. Such trusty friends,
 With zeal inflamed and bound by common ties
 To strict fidelity, will counsel well
 And lure adherents from the opposing ranks.
 Then, if I win this realm, I may become
 The Angels' Chieftain, Sovereign of the skies.
 Why should I then cringe to Almighty God
 Who does me grievous wrong? I am resolved,
 No longer will I be His vassal slave."

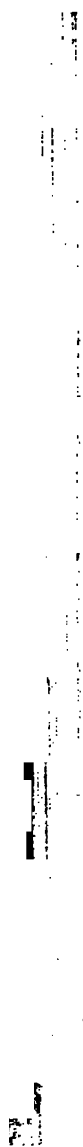
This idea of making Pride—the prince of the deadly sins,—the motive of the treason and rebellion of the great, rebel Archangel, is not only in accordance with the Catholic teaching of the age in which Cædmon lived, but is far more natural, far grander, and far truer to human failings at their noblest, than the motive of Jealousy—one of the most unlovable of human failings—which Milton attributes to his colossal hero. With his peculiar anthropopathic conception of the Trinity, Milton depicts the Deity as making a *pronunciamento* with regard to his Son—

"This day I have begot whom I declare
 My only Son, and on this holy hill
 Him hath anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand. Your head I him appoint."

In consequence of this degree, Satan turns rebel,
 and,



Around me, even now, are strong allies.



. . . fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed.
Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipped, unobeyed, the Throne supreme,
Contemptuous.

As in Cædmon, so here, this heart-secreted treason at length finds vent in rebellious word and act. In Milton, however, it is not in soliloquy that Satan first gives expression to his disloyalty, but in a far craftier way. Awakening his "next subordinate" one celestial night, he approaches him with consummate skill and orders him to haste with all who fly the banner of the great Lucifer,

Homeward with flying march where we possess
The quarters of the North,* there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands,
Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant,

.
At length into the limits of the North
They came, and Satan to his royal seat

* *Vide* Note H.

High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold—
The place of great Lucifer.

In the speech which follows, Satan utters dark hints of treason, when Abdiel, one of the Seraphim, who was present at this gathering in the North and remained loyal to the Deity, denounces, in no measured terms, the apostasy of his Chieftain. Stung by this rebuff, the rebel Archangel throws off the mask and openly advocates rebellion :

“ Our puissance is our own, our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings, carry to the Anointed King ;
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.”

In the description of the expulsion of the rebel Angels from the Empyrean, we have a fine example of the difference between the two poets in their mode of treating a supernatural subject. Cædmon's account, as we shall now see, is terse, graphic, and mundane. He does not attempt the impossible. He describes supramundane events as if he were narrating human events, and apparently without

any consciousness of incongruity; and the result is a seemingly natural narrative :

When the All-powerful, in secret knew
The great presumption of his Angel-chief
And how, by folly moved, he sought to stir
Unholy war within His joyous realm,
The mighty God was wroth and straightway doomed
The apostate Fiend to expiate his crime
With sufferings greater than all mortal ills.
(For Love divine was turned to sacred Hate)
And heavenly Justice hurled him from his throne
And cast him headlong down the burning gulf
Which leads to deepest Hell.

For three long days

And three successive nights the Apostate fell
Together with his lone rebellious tribe,
And all thenceforth to demons were transformed
And doomed triumphless to the swart Abyss.
There on the approach of each returning eve
The fires, rekindled, fiercely rage anew,
And Night appears immeasurably long.
Then ere the dawn leads back the joyless light,
Sharp biting cold and glacial blasts attack
Their fervid forms, and evermore they writhe
In lurid torture or deep, piercing cold.
Such were the apostate fiends, who at the first
Filled Hell's abyss, and such their punishment.

This simple narrative is expanded by Milton into a detailed account of the Wars in Heaven, as related by Raphael, and occupies the whole of the Sixth

Book. This part of *Paradise Lost* is an attempt to accomplish the impossible, and in our opinion is the least interesting portion of Milton's epic. The difficulties which Milton had to overcome were not only gigantic, they were insuperable. It is not only *difficult* to narrate in human language the happenings in a state of existence where time and space are unknown ; it is *impossible*, because it is unthinkable. It is not possible so much as to picture, even in imagination, either infinitude or boundless *space*, or eternity or boundless *time* ; nor is it possible to depict mentally any supernatural conditions whatsoever. We know, and can know, nothing about them, and have no language in which to express any such supernatural or problematical phenomena. That Milton, possessing, as he undoubtedly did, a philosophical training, must have been cognisant of these limitations of the human mind and of human speech, can be conclusively proved from his own words. When he describes the Emyrean as

. . . undetermined square or round,

it is simply the Miltonic way of expressing solemn nonsense. In the narrative of the expulsion of the Angels from the Emyrean, where the poet attempts to describe that which is not describable, he has either to use vague expressions, or to confine him-



*And all thenceforth to demons were transformed
And doomed triumphless to the swart Abyss.*

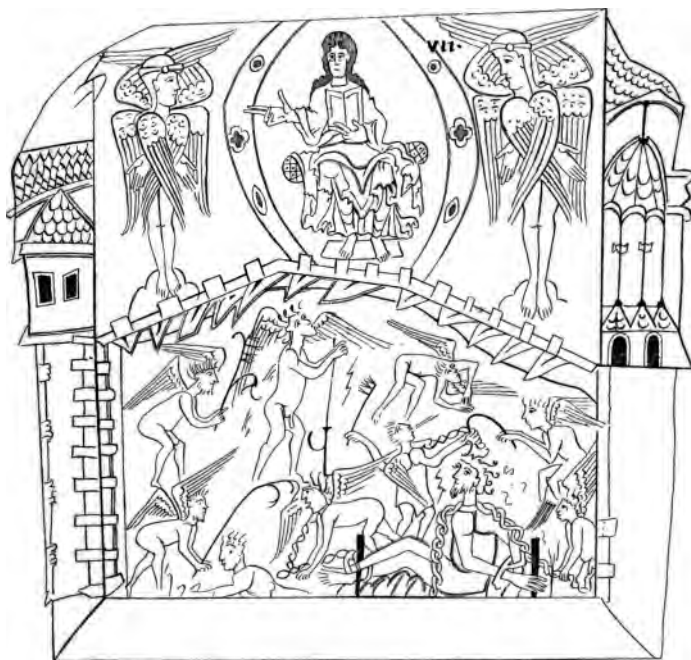
But ere long deep remorse and envious thought
 Made willing captive each rebellious heart ;
 For while the false Archangel and his band
 Lay prone in liquid fire, scarce visible
 Amid the surging clouds of rolling smoke
 And deep infernal gloom, the Angelic host
 Who fell not from their love still held far off
 The empyreal battlements of Heaven.
 This, then perceived the traitorous fiends in Hell,
 And in one moment stood their folly bare
 In having thus exchanged celestial bliss
 For the unending torments which their pride
 And groundless arrogance had thus entailed.

In a similar strain, Milton tells how Satan,

. . . with his horrid crew,
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
 Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath ; for now the thought
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him : round he throws his baleful eyes,
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.

.
 His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced
 Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
 In Vallombrosa.

.
 So thick bestrown,
 Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
 Under amazement of their hideous change.



*The Angelic host
Who fell not from their love still held far off
The Empyrean battlements of Heaven.*

At this point in the narrative, the two versions, although sufficiently similar to show a common origin, differ considerably in mode of treatment. In the less artificial narrative of Cædmon, the Arch-Fiend is represented as being bound fast in iron bands in deepest Hell; and in this position, addressing the fallen Angels in a speech, which, for dramatic power, is unsurpassed even by Milton. It is true that in Cædmon there is no "high mount," no "glistening throne," no "dazzling palace of Pandemonium," "rising like an exhalation," and "built like a temple"; there are no spectacular effects; simply liquid fires, and chilling frosts, and horrid torments, and the vanquished Archangel—God's prisoner—held in adamantine chains, bemoaning his lost estate, in terms of deepest remorse mingled with threats of direst revenge.

Then Satan sorrowing spake:

"This straitened place!

Oh! how unlike those Heavenly seats where once
In Heaven's high Kingdom we as princes reigned!
But now expelled by Him, the Almighty One,
That Heaven alas! which by divine decree
Is destined for Mankind. 'T is this most grieves
My anxious heart, that earthborn Man should hold
My glorious seat and dwell in endless joy
While we in Hell's avenging horrors pine.
Oh! that my hands were free! that I might hence

But for a moment, for a winter's day ;
Then with this host would I—but now these chains
Press on me and these iron bands embrace !
Oh ! I am kingdomless ! Hell's fetters cling
Hard on each limb. Above, beneath, the flame
Fierce rages. Sight more horrible mine eyes
Ne'er yet have witnessed. O'er these scorching deeps
The fire no respite knows. The strong forged chain
With ever-biting links forbids my flight.
My feet are bound, my hands are manacled ;
Around my neck is forged this lattice-belt
Of iron strangely wrought by Angel-skill ;
And e'en the pathway to the Gates of Hell
Lies thick beset with foul and horrid Shapes
That bar all exit. In this loathsome den
We, princes once, chained by a Tyrant's whim
Now suffer chastisement for fancied wrong.
'T is true we may not vent our dire revenge
On Him who thus denies us Heavenly light
And show our godlike strength in open war ;
Yet may we foil His will."

In the Anglo-Saxon version here quoted, it will be seen that the rebel Archangel does not deign to consult with any inferior as to his plan of revenge, and not until he has fully matured his scheme, does he broach his Arch-demon ideas to any follower. Indeed, were it not for the fact that Cædmon's Satan is represented as being bound by "Hell's fetters" clinging "hard on each limb," his proud, despotic nature would have spurned consultation

with even the highest of his fallen hosts, and he would simply have announced his sovereign intention of undertaking the perilous adventure alone and single-handed.

In Milton's more elaborate version, however, Satan, recovering from his downfall through Chaos, into

The fiery surge that from the precipice
of Heaven received them falling, sees by his side
Beëlzebub,

One next himself in power, and next in crime,
and discloses to him the first hint of his resolve,

“To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”

During this talk with Beëlzebub, Satan formulates the crucial axiom of his demoniacal life :

“To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,”

and suggests that a Council be summoned of Hell's peers to discuss a plan of campaign,

“ . . . how we may henceforth most offend
Our eneny, our own loss how repair.”

The whole of this part of the narrative, which comprises the conference between Satan and Beëlzebub, and the enumeration and description of the

Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,

but now are princes in Hell, is peculiar to Milton, and has no counterpart in Cædmon's poem. But in the speech which Satan addresses to the fallen Angels, after having aroused them from their stupor, and still more, in his speech from the "throne of royal state" on the opening and at the close of the imperial parliament in Pandemonium, the two versions again run parallel and evince a remarkable similarity of thought.

But here a word of explanation may be necessary. In both poems the inception of the idea of the ruin of Man is *Satan's*—and his alone; but whereas, in the Anglo-Saxon poem, as it has come down to us, Satan is the sole speaker and advocate of the scheme of revenge; in Milton, the Council of war is conducted on less despotic lines, and each one of the chief princes of Hell takes part in the discussion. It is beyond doubt that Cædmon's poem originally contained the narrative of the debate; but in consequence of the break in the manuscript, at this point, and the excision of several leaves, we can only conjecture, from the sequel, the result of Satan's advice:

“Begin we then, consult
About this war.”

One thing is certain. In both poems Satan is represented as the ruling mind in the Council, whose advice is finally adopted, whether as in Cædmon, the Arch-Fiend *himself* advocates his own scheme of war, or whether, as in Milton, Satan, with craftier statesmanship makes use of Beëlzebub and others to present and advocate his views, while he himself remains an apparently impartial listener.

The setting of the scene, when the ruined Arch-angel is about to speak to his fallen comrades for the first time, after their expulsion from the Empyrean, is pathetic and beautiful in the extreme :

Then spake the haughty One, who erst in Heaven
O'er all the Angelic hosts most brightly shone,
Fairest of all God's creatures, most beloved
By Him who made him.

This opening strain of Cædmon's describes the Arch-Traitor as he appeared while the august Vicegerent of Heaven.

Milton, on the other hand, depicts him as the “dread commander” of Hell :

He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared

Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
 Of glory obscured ; as when the sun new-risen
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams ;

Darkened so, yet shone

Above them all the Archangel : but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
 Forever now to have their lot in pain.

In both versions, there is a touch in the description of Satan, as he first attempts to speak,—the expression of a thought,—so artistic, so natural, and so simple that one is apt to pass it by unnoticed.

Cædmon with the utter artlessness of true art tells us :

Sátan mathelode, Sorgiende spræc.

Satan then sorrowing spake.

Milton depicts the fallen Archangel as gazing for a moment upon the millions,

. . . from eternal splendours flung
 For his revolt,

and tells us,

Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth : at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of anything more grandly pathetic than this picture of the Archangelic nature in ruins; the grandeur of the Archangelic character shattered, yet retaining so much of its former peerlessness in tears and muffled sobs.

It is during this first speech, delivered in the Stygian lake, and before the erection of the palace of Pandemonium, that Satan gives the primal hint of his plan of campaign, which is subsequently adopted, and made the keynote of the speech of Beëlzebub :

. . . "our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not : that he no less
At length from us may find, Who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds ; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that He ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption—thither, or elsewhere ;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired ;

For who can think submission ? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved."

No sooner is " the high capital of Satan and his
peers " upraised, with roof of fretted gold," than the
heralds proclaim a solemn Council, and Satan, seated

High on a throne of royal state,

His proud imaginations thus displayed :

" Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven !—
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost."

Then, having shown that their infernal kingdom
was safe from envious foes, he urges them to fresh
rebellion and proposes :

" . . . by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."

In this speech, the dread Emperor of Hell makes
no allusion whatsoever to his own cherished scheme
of uncompromising revenge, but with consummate
craft, leaves the unfolding of his plan to his Minister
of State.

In the Anglo-Saxon version, however, Satan states
in bold, defiant, and unmistakable language, the most
vulnerable point of attack, if they would succeed in
accomplishing their revenge :

'T is true we may not vent our dire revenge
On Him who thus denies us Heavenly light
And show our godlike strength in open war ;
Yet may we foil His will.

“ He hath devised,
'Twixt this swart Gulf and our ancestral Seats,
A beauteous World, if rumour be believed,
And hath already formed to dwell therein
A race with high intelligence endowed 420
And fashioned in His own similitude.
With this, His mignon tribe, He purposes
To fill the realms which our dread overthrow
And cruel fall left vacant. Here then lies
Our only hope of adequate revenge ;—
To ruin, if we may, this new-born Man
And on his race, eternal woe entail.
'T is futile now to cherish idle dreams
That God will e'er repent Him of His ire
Or soon restore the thrones and matchless realms 430
Which He has once usurped. Vain is the attempt
To move the Victor's mind. Whate'er we lost
Is lost beyond recall. Naught now remains
But to devise a scheme by which to thwart
The Victor's known intent and deftly strive
That Man possess not our escheated realm,
But urged by subtle craft to disobey
The stern command of his despotic God,
Forfeit celestial Grace. Then will He cast

440 These faithless creatures from His fickle heart,
And in one moment hurl them from their height
Of stainless bliss, down to this dark abode
To share our bitter torment and become
Our vassal slaves.

“Begin we then, consult
About this war.

“If I, of old, gave aught
Of princely treasure or rich recompense
To any warrior of my valiant host,
450 While still we held our regal eminence,
With naught more grateful could he now repay
My former favour than by speedy help,
And, passing hence through Hell's grim barriers,
Soar upward through the clouds on mighty wing
To Earth's dominion where, in bliss enthroned,
This new-born Being reigns ; while we are doomed
To bear the torture of this prison-house.
As yet in God's esteem this Adam stands
Pre-eminent, and may ere long possess,
460 (For so it is decreed,) our rightful realm.
If any one of this my sovereign host
Can counsel and devise a crafty plan
To lure his soul from loyal obedience,
Then shall he be most hateful to his Lord ;
His weal shall cease and some fell punishment
Become his lot.

“Deeply in mind revolve

How he may be beguiled. If he but fall,
Then shall I rest me in these chains content
And he, the daring one, who first proclaims 470
The fall of Man, seduced by crafty words,
I swear, by my eternal majesty,
Shall be exalted to the second throne
In Hell's dominion, and rewarded be
With whatsoe'er of state or wealth or power
In future ages may be proudly won
Within this fiery realm."

.
Without delay, the apostate Angel donned
His glistening arms ; and tightly on his head
His helmet bound, secured with many a clasp. 480
Thus armed, and with a heart deep-versed in guile
He started on his fatal enterprise.
High toward the fiery concave first he shot,
A spiral column bright with lurid flame
Showed where he took his flight. The gates of Hell
Were quickly left behind as lion-like
In strength and desperate in fiendish mood
He dashed the fire aside. The farthest bounds
Of that infernal kingdom passed, he urged
His venturous flight, tho' now with easier wing. 490
E'en as he upward sped, his crafty mind
Unceasingly revolved the subtlest words
Of specious flattery with which to lure,
To wicked deeds and deepest infamy,

The spotless subjects of the eternal King,
 Onward he took his way and soon descried,
 Far off the trembling light of this fair World
 Arrived, at length, he trod with fendish joy
 The verdant paths of Man's primeval home
 500 Impatient, now to prove his mission crowned
 With dark success.

Erelong amid the shade
 Of Eden's fair wide-spreading foliage,
 He saw the parents of Mankind ; the Man
 Whose comely form bespoke a wise design ;
 And, by his side, radiant with guileless youth,
 His God-created Spouse. Above them spread
 Two Trees rich-laden with immortal fruit,
 The Trees of Life and Death implanted there
 510 By Power divine, that Man might freely choose
 Unending weal or never ceasing woe.
 Far different were their fruits ! The one was fair
 And glistening to the sight ; to touch most soft
 And delicate. Such was the Tree of Life.
 And whosoever ate thereof should live
 For evermore, neither by Age impaired,
 Nor grievous sickness harmed, but live his life
 And pass his days in joy ; and e'en on Earth
 Should dwell beneath the smile of Heaven's high
 King,
 520 And going hence in peace, should have decreed
 Such honours as high Heaven alone can give.

Swarth was the other fruit and dim and dark
That on the Tree of Death hung temptingly,
Full fraught with bitterness. (~~For mortal man~~
~~Must know the Evil and the Good.~~) And he
Whoe'er should taste the baleful fruit that grew
On this accursèd Tree, his doom assured,
Must ever after live a life of pain
And sweating of the brow and sorrow dire.
Old age would from him take all youthful joys, 530
Bold deeds and lordly power, ~~and at the last,~~
E'en Death ~~would be one portion of his doom.~~
Awhile he might enjoy the carnal bliss
Of mortal life; then seek that darkest land
With lurid flames illumed and be the slave
Of ~~fiends~~—the direst danger of Mankind
And most enduring.

This the Foe well knew,
Satan's dark messenger who warred with God.
Then in the body of a worm he twined 540
With devil's craft around the Tree of Death,
Took of the fruit and turned his wily form
To where he knew the beauteous handiwork
Of Heaven's eternal King would surely be.
Then spake the Enemy his primal word—
A query charged with lies :

“Cravest thou aught,
O Adam, from thy God? Hither I come
Journeying from far to bring thee His behest.

550 But little time has flown since at His side
I sat, and then He bade me quickly hie
To Earth with His command, that of this fruit
Thou shouldest eat, since thus thy power and skill
And mental grasp far greater will become,
More radiant still thy body, and thy form
More beauteous than before. If aught there is
Of treasure in the World, (so spake the King),
E'en this shall not be wanting thy desire
When once thy ready mind hath wrought this act
560 Of loyal obedience to the sovereign word
Of Heaven's King, and thou in gratitude
Hast served thy Master's will and made thee dear
To thine own Lord.

“I heard Him as He sat
In dazzling brightness, praise thy deeds and words
And speak about thy life, so must thou now
Fulfil whate'er commands His Angel brings
To Earth.

“In this thy World are regions broad
570 And green and thou art lord of this domain ;
But in the realm of Heaven, God rules supreme.
The Lord of Men, All-powerful on High
Deigns not at times to visit Man, but sends
His vassals forth to speak on His behalf.
He bids thee now by me, His messenger,
True wisdom learn and zealously obey
His Angel's word. Take then this fruit in hand

Bite it and taste ; thy mind will be enlarged
Thy form far fairer, for the Sovereign God
Thy Lord, Himself this help hath sent to thee 580
From Heaven's high Kingdom."

Then Adam spake :

(The God-created Man majestic stood)
"When here I heard the mighty God, the Lord
Of Triumph, speak in strong and trenchant tones,
Bidding me keep inviolate His commands
And gave this bride, this Wife of beauteous mien,
To be the sharer of my blissful home,
He charged me to beware lest through deceit
My will should be seduced and I should taste 590
The Tree of Death ; since he who near his heart
Should cherish aught of sin should meet his doom
In blackest Hell.

"I know not (since with lies
Thou mayest come and dark designing thought)
Whether or not thou art in very deed,
A messenger from Heaven ; for to say truth,
Naught do I recognise in all thy words
Or ways or subtle hints—naught do I see
In this thy journey here, or in thy speech 600
To prove thy mission true.

"I know full well

What He Himself, the great Protector, said
When last I saw Him here, that all His words
Should be revered and cherished lovingly

And all His precepts strictly be obeyed.—
Unlike art thou to any of His host
That ever I have seen, nor dost thou show
E'en slightest token from our gracious Lord,
610 Assuring pledge of His divine command.
Thee, I will ne'er obey, so hie thee hence.
In the Almighty God, who wrought me thus
With His creative arms and placed me here
With loving hands, in Him I firmly trust.
From His high Realm, if such His sovereign Will,
He can endow His creatures with all good
Without His vassal's aid."

Then turned the Fiend
In wrathful mood, and saw, not far away,
620 The Woman's perfect form, the beauteous Eve.
And feigning deep regret expressed a fear
Lest direst ills from henceforth should befall
Their farthest offspring through the guilty words
Her spouse had breathed :

" Full well I know," said he,
" Our Sovereign God will justly be incensed
When, this long journey done, this tedious path
Retraced, your stubborn message I relate ;
That ye, His creatures, dare to disobey
630 Whate'er commands He now hath hither sent
From His far Eastern Throne. Now must He come
In person to demand your quick response,
Since I, His messenger, am powerless

To carry out the task. And this, I fear,
Will draw upon yourselves the silent ire
Of mighty God. But if thyself wilt bow,
With willing mind submissive, to my word
'T were easy to devise the ready way.
Ponder within thy breast, that from you both
Thou may'st avert this dire, impending woe, 640
If thou wilt do as I shall now advise :
Eat of this fruit ; then will thy sight be clear
To see forthwith widely o'er all this World ;
And e'en beyond, thy sight shall pierce and see
The Throne of God Himself, and thou shalt dwell
Within the radiance of Heavenly Grace.

If thou should'st gain the love of thy dear lord
And win his trust in all that thou dost say,
In after days thou mayest rule thy spouse.
Disclose to him the thoughts that burn e'en now 650
Within thy breast, and why thou hast performed,
By my advice, the mandate of thy God ;
Then will he quit, at once, the hateful strife
And evil answer which now rage within
The caverns of his heart. Let us forthwith
With singleness of aim approach thy lord ;
Do thou with cautious zeal urge him to heed
And follow thy advice lest ye become
Most hateful to your Lord.

“ If thou succeed 660
In this thine enterprise I will conceal,

O best of Womankind, from our great King
 The idle words and slanders of thy lord ;
 How he accused God's messenger of lies
 Ay, and falsely said that I am eager
 For the wrong, an ambassador of wrath
 And not God's messenger.

"Would that he knew

My true celestial rank ; for I can tell

670 The origin of all the Angel-tribes ;
 And on the vaulted dome of Heaven have gazed ;
 And many an æon I, with eager will
 And faithful mind, have served the mighty King
 The Lord Himself. Unlike indeed am I
 To Man's Arch-enemy !"

Thus did he lead

The Woman on with lies, and with his wiles
 Allured her to that wrong ; until at length
 The Serpent's counsel, deep down in her heart

680 Began to rage, (to her a weaker mind
 Had the Creator given,) and now her mood
 Thus straitly pressed by fiendish skill, gave way,
 And from his hand she took the noxious fruit
 Culled from the Tree of Death, and thus defied
 The Lord's express command.

No greater sin

Had e'er been traced for Man than this dread
 breach
 Of human loyalty.

Great wonder 't is

That Holy God should even now permit 690
His children's guileless hearts to be ensnared
With specious lies by reason of the Fall.

The fruit she ate, God's will defied and broke
His just command.

And now with vision clear,
(Usurious gift of that malignant Foe),
Her strengthened sight pierced far and wide. All
things

In Heaven and Earth far fairer seemed to her,
The World more beauteous and the works of God
Grander and mightier than e'er before. 700

'T was not by Man's device that she beheld
This wondrous change ; but that foul wretch beguiled
Her soul with studious care and deftly raised
The vision in her mind, so that she seemed
To see thus far o'er Heaven's extended realm.
Then spake the Fiend in secret hate : ('T was not
Her weal he sought with these fair sounding words)

" I need not tell thee, since thyself can'st see,
O Eve the Good, that since thou hast believed
My words to thee, and heeded my advice 710
No form or beauty can with thine compare.

This glorious Light, gift of a loving God,
Which I have brought, bright with the glow of
Heaven,

Now shines before thee far along thy path
 And bathes thy glistening form in golden mist
 So thou may'st touch its rays.

“Go, tell thy lord

What visions thou hast seen, what wondrous powers
 My coming has revealed ; and if, e'en now
 720 With modesty of mind he will obey,
 The counsel that I bring, I will bestow
 On him, with generous hand, that goodly Light
 Which now adorns thyself. Nor will I e'er
 Reproach him for the slanders that he spake,
 Unworthy though he be of pardoning grace,
 For such malicious charges as he made ;—
 Thus shall thy offspring ever rule their lives ;
 When they do evil then shall they repent
 And working works of Love avert the curse
 730 Of Heaven's High King and thenceforth win His
 Grace.”

Then turned she to the spot where Adam stood,
 She who was fairest of all Womankind,
 Most beauteous of all who e'er were born
 Into this World, the handiwork of God
 Himself ;—though even then unconsciously
 She was undone, misled by crafty lies,
 That through the Fiend's device they both might be
 Hateful to God, and, through the Devil's wiles,
 Lose their estate, the favour of their Lord

And forfeit Heaven's realm.

740

Many a time

It bodes dire woe to Man to take no heed
Of kindly warning while he has the power.

In her hands she bare the accursèd fruit,
Some on her bosom lay, that fruit which erst
The Lord of Lords strictly forbade her touch,
Fruit of the Tree of Death.

The glorious Chief

Had graciously revealed His will to Man,
His earthly vassal, that he might avoid
The greater Death. The Holy Lord prepared
For all mankind a Heavenly realm, enriched
With wide-spread bliss, if they would but forbear
To touch the fruit with bitterness fulfilled
Which hung from that fell tree, the Tree of
Death ;

750

'T was this the Lord forbade.

The foe of God,

Inspired by hate of Heaven's eternal King,
Enticed her then with lies. The woman's mind
And weaker thought fell, powerless to resist.
Now she began to trust his words and do
As he desired, in full believing trust,
That from her God in truth, those mandates came
Brought by the Fiend and urged so warily
With lying word and token, and his pledge

760

Of loyal affection and fidelity.

Then to her spouse she spake :

“ This goodly fruit

O Adam, mine own lord, is sweet indeed

770 And pleasant to the sense ; and sure I am

That this bright messenger in very deed

Is God's good Angel, for I clearly see,

E'en in his garb, the envoy of our Lord

The King of Heaven. Surely 't is better far

To gain his favour than his hate. If thou

Spake aught this day to him in bitter scorn

He will forgive thy haste, if once we show

Obedience to his word. Will hateful strife

With God's own messenger avail thee aught ?

780 We need his kindly offices to bear

Our errands to the All-powerful King of Heaven.

The promise which he gave of heavenly Light

And keener vision of the Universe

He hath fulfilled.

“ E'en now can I discern

Where the Almighty dwells, enthroned in bliss,

Creator of the world ! And I can see

The Angelic host revolve with trembling wing

Around the Throne, of all created things

790 The greatest and most joyous company.

Who could bestow on mortal man the gift

Of such far-seeing sense but God alone,

The Ruler of the skies ? And I can hear
From farthest point, throughout this great, wide
world ;

And I can see o'er all the broad expanse
Of Earthly things. And I can plainly hear
The music of the Spheres, as heard in Heaven.
Soon as I tasted this delicious fruit
All became sudden Light within the mind
And all without was Light.

800

“ I have it here,
Mine own good lord, here in my hand, and fain
Would give it thee, my first most precious gift.
From all this messenger, with cautious words,
Lately unfolded to my wondering mind,
I doubt not that it comes brought here from God
With His command. No likeness does it bear
To aught else on this Earth, but as I learn
(So saith this messenger) it comes direct
From God.”

810

Oft did she speak to him and urged
Him all the livelong day to that dark deed,
To break their Lord's command.

Meanwhile, near by,
Hell's Envoy stood, inflaming his desires
And urging him with wiles ; and followed him
With dark intent. The Foe was near at hand,
He who had come from far, alone to wage
That danger-fraught campaign.

820

Much studious care

Had he bestowed in order to corrupt,
Mislead, and in the end to lure Mankind
Into the greater Death, that they might lose
The Almighty's promised gift, the lordly power
O'er Heaven's domain.

Well the Hell-miscreant knew,

When he seduced with lying words and looks
The beauteous Eve, the fairest of her race,
And bent her thought to work his evil aims

830

So that henceforth she spake his hellish will
And helped to ruin God's own handiwork,
Full well he knew that they must needs endure
God's righteous ire and endless pains of Hell
And dungeon-punishment, since God's command
They thus had disobeyed.

Then to her lord

Full oft she spake, fairest of Womankind,
Until at length his mind was full of doubt
From trusting to the promises she made

840

Of Light and widened vision of the World.
(But all she did was done with true intent.)
As yet she knew not that so many ills
And sinful woes must follow to Mankind
Because she deemed it wise to heed the words
Of that false messenger. For she believed
That in the revelations which she made
To Adam's listening ear she but disclosed

A token from on High and wrought the Will
Of their exalted King.

Then in his breast 850

The mind of Adam changed, and all his heart
Went forth to do her will. From Eve's own hand
He took both Death and Hell ; for such it was
Though in the form of fruit. Beneath it lurked
The dream of Death, the Devil's artifice,
And loss of Eden and Eternal woe
With ruin of Mankind. Such was the food
Unholy fruit !

Thus came the curse within
And stained the heart ! 860

Then gaily laughed the Fiend,
The bitter-purposed messenger of Hell ;
And making sport of his infernal deed
Promised to take the grateful thanks of both
To his liege Lord !

His errand done, and crowned
With fell success, his fiendish joy broke forth
In deep soliloquy, addressed to him
Who reigned in Hell :

“ Now have I full discharged 870

The honoured trust to me decreed by fate,
Thy will performed ; for many a day to come
Are men seduced, this Adam and this Eve !
And now that through my counsel they have mocked
The orders of their King, their certain doom

Is the withdrawal of His love ; and hence
No longer may they claim that heavenly Realm,
But must perforce their darksome journey take
To Hell's abyss. Surely thou need'st not bear
880 Deep sorrow in thy heart, though straitly bound
In chains ; nor mourn that here on Earth man
dwells

In highest bliss while we, wrongly deprived
Through thy great pride, of those high palaces
And goodly courts where once we dwelt, are doomed
To naught but punishment and endless woes,
A land of darkest Night.

“ For God's fierce ire
Was stirred against us, in that we disdained,
E'en at the Court of Heaven, to bow the head
890 In mock subjection to the Holy Lord.
Nor was it congruous to our high estate
To serve in vassalage. 'T was this that made
'The Almighty wrath of mood and stern of mind
So that, at length, He drove us down to Hell,
Felled in deep-scorching flames, and once again
Reared in His heavenly Realm, celestial Seats
The heritage of Man.

“ So let thy heart
Rejoice, since here on Earth both of thy dreams
900 Are now fulfilled, and all the sons of Man
Their heavenly heritage and fair domain
Will lose, and full of hate, will be thy slaves

In yonder flames. Nor ends our victory here.
Much sorrow of the heart have we entailed
On God Himself. Whate'er of misery
We must endure, is now on Adam's race
Fully avenged. God's sovereign hate assured,
And the dire ruin of all humankind,
With pain of Death, my wounded pride is healed.
Around my heart great thoughts revolve. The wrongs 910
We long have borne, fruit of relentless spite,
Are all avenged.

“ At once will I retrace
My joyous steps back to the lurid flames
And seek the spot where Satan straitly bound
With tightly-woven chains, a captive lies
In darkest Hell.”

Then swiftly downward sped
That direst messenger of woe, and passed
The gates of Hell ; thence urged his toilsome way 920
Through the expanse of flame and reached at length
The point where Satan lay, his lordly Chief,
With fetters bound.

Meanwhile, great sorrow filled
The guilty heart of Adam and his Spouse,
And oft between them words of sadness passed,
For much they feared the anger of their Lord
And Heaven's avenging wrath. And oftentimes
They sat deep-brooding o'er their sin, and oft
In bitter anguish chided their own selves 930

For listening to the Fiend's delusive words.
Great was the Woman's grief ; for well she knew
That through seductive arts they both had lost
The love of Heaven. And penitent in mind
She wept, for now she saw that Light depart
Which he who counselled them to do the crime
Had showed to her—false and illusive sign
Of his pretended claim. Deep sorrow burned
Within their breasts as dark remorse displayed
940 The unnumbered ills and ghastly punishment
Their sin entailed. At times on bended knee,
These guilty partners in a common sin,
In heartfelt prayer, invoked their heavenly King
The Lord of Victory, the source of Good,
Beseeching Him that they alone might bear
And expiate the deadly penalty
Due to their guilty act, since they alone
Had broken His command.

As yet no sense
950 Of human shame had marred their happiness,
(Though now they keenly felt their naked state) ;
Nor had there been by Heaven's decree assigned
A settled course of life in that fair land,
For naught they knew of toil or anxious care,
But might have lived a life of holy Rest
Had they but made the will of God their King
Their chief concern.

Many a word of sadness

Passed between the two, for each shared deeply
In the other's woe. 960

“ O Eve, my helpmate,”
(Thus spake the Man) “ in evil hour indeed
Didst thou mark out our future path. E'en now
Seest thou not the dark abyss of Hell
With open gates wide-yawning at our feet ?
The raging of its fires I plainly hear
E'en from this distant spot. And how unlike
The beauteous realm of Heaven are yonder flames !
But now no fairer land than this our Earth
May we anticipate, nor can we ask 970
Such favour of our Lord, since thou didst heed
The evil counsellor who planned our woe
And urged disloyalty to Heaven's dread King,
The Ruler of the World. Naught now remains
Save that we mourn in deepest penitence
The visit of that Fiend, since God Himself
Bade us beware that greatest of all ills,
Unending torment. E'en at this moment
Hunger and burning thirst, warring within
Like deadly foes, already rend in twain 980
This mortal flesh ! And how shall we protect
Our fragile life or find subsistence here
When piercing winds from heaven's four quarters
blow
And mists arise or showers of hail descend ?
When biting frost and winter's cruel cold

Bind fast the Earth in iron bands? or when
 The solar Sphere sends forth its glowing beams
 And radiant heat? How can we then withstand,
 In our defenceless state, each sudden change
 990 Of Nature's fickle mood, devoid alike
 Of shelter from the storm and present store
 Of needful food? In truth, possessing naught
 Unless it be the dread hostility
 Of an offended and All-puissant God?
 Deeply I grieve, (since now thou hast beguiled
 My loving trust and hast subjected both
 To God's just ire,) that ever I invoked
 The great Creator's might, bone of my bone,
 To frame thy beauteous form and place thee here
 1000 To share with me the joys of this fair World.
 Yea, and it may repent me all my days
 That e'er I gazed upon thee with mine eyes."

Then answered Eve, fairest of Womankind,
 Most beautiful of wives, the handiwork
 Of God e'en though undone through subtle craft:

"Well mayest thou upbraid me as thou dost,
 O Adam, my belovèd spouse, and yet
 Believe me, that thyself canst not bewail
 More bitterly the outcome of this deed
 1010 Than I do in my heart."

Then Adam spake :

“ If I but knew the Almighty's sovereign Will,
What penalty awaits this fearful crime,
None couldst thou find more ready to perform
That Will than I ; e'en though by Heaven's decree
I had to plunge beneath the surging flood
And seek the Ocean's deep and sunken caves.
No depth could terrify or rapid stream
Could keep me from the abyss, if thus I might
Perform God's holy Will.

1020

“ No heart have I

For worship, now that I have forfeited,
Beyond retrieve, the favour of our King.
But let us hasten into yonder wold
And sit within the grove's protecting shade,
For naked as we are it is not meet
To tarry longer here.”

Departing thence

They sought the shelter of the grateful wold
With deepest grief oppressed, and sat apart,
Awaiting now whatever righteous doom
Heaven might inflict for guilty faithlessness
To that high trust which God had erst imposed.
Then sheltered by the forest's inmost shade
They plucked the leaves and clothed themselves
therewith.

1030

(For they were destitute of other garb)
And every morn they knelt in solemn prayer

That God, the Mighty, Ruler of the World
Would not forget them in their great distress
1040 But graciously reveal how they thenceforth
Should live their ruined lives.

When many days
Had come and gone, the mighty God at length
Revealed Himself, walking at eventide
Amid the glories of that Earthly realm.
The King All-merciful, in pity stooped
To learn His children's need, and how they bare
Their ruined state, bereft of all the Grace
Which at the first adorned their mortal state.
1050 Soon as they heard the voice of Holy God
They sought, with saddened mind and shorn of joy,
The shelter of the thickest grove, and seized
With sudden dread concealed themselves within
The rocky portals of a cave.

Straightway,
The Heavenly Chief, the mighty Lord of Hosts,
Summoned the Warden of this Earthly sphere
And bade His son approach.

Then Adam cried
1060 In deep humility :

“ Lord of my life,
Devoid of raiment, I conceal me here
And cover me with leaves. Great is my guilt
And this foul sin of mine fills me with pain
And weighs upon my soul. I do not dare,

All naked as I am, to leave this shade
And meet Thee face to face."

Then spake the King :

" Tell me, my son, why seekest thou in shame
The shelter of the grove? Dost thou conceive 1070
That I have sense of shame? Whence does it
come

That 'mid surrounding joy thou knowest aught
Of woe? and wouldst conceal thy naked form
With clothing from the trees? Whence knowest
thou

This earthly sorrow, for thou say'st, thy life
Is full of care and thou thyself full sad
With downcast mind? Why dost thou feel the
need

Of clothing thus thy form, unless thou hast
Been faithless to thy trust and touched the fruit
Of yon forbidden Tree?" 1080

Then in reply

The man confessed :

" This beauteous bride of
mine,

This virgin Wife, did place within my hand
The baleful fruit and I, O mine own Lord,
Forgetful of Thy Love, did eat, and now
Within myself plain token do I bear
Of this my sin, since day by day, I see
Fresh sorrows teeming, in upon my path."

1090 Then thus the Almighty spake, close-questioning
The guilty Wife :

“ Didst thou have need of aught,
O daughter Eve, here 'midst the ample joys,
The new creations and the bounteous gifts
Of Paradise, that thou didst set thine heart
To taste the Tree of Death, and in disdain
Of my esteem, didst pluck and eat its fruit
To thy great harm ? ay, and didst give thereof
To Adam, though I straitly charged you both
1100 To shun that deadly fruit ? ”

The virgin Wife

In deepest shame replied :

“ With artful words
Of fairest import was I sore beguiled.
Most urgently the Serpent prompted me
To this foul crime, this daring act of Sin,
Till overcome by specious argument
I basely gave the victory to the Fiend
And to my shame I seized the tempting tree
1110 And ate the fruit.”

Forthwith the mighty God,
Protector of Mankind, proclaimed His will
That thenceforth should the Serpent be con-
demned

To wander far and wide :

“ Thy livelong life,”
For thus He spake, “ shalt thou accursèd be ;

And on thy breast shalt drag thy footless form
O'er the fair face of Earth ; and dust shalt eat
The remnant of thy days, and long as life
And breath remain—just meed of this great crime, 1120
Thy malice hath inspired.

“ And there shall burn
Within the Woman's breast, a mortal Hate
And quenchless enmity, and she shall tread
Thy hostile head beneath her feet, while thou
May'st strive, with deep and crafty plans, to snare
The offspring of this new-born race. As long
As this fair World shall stand, a deadly feud
Shall last 'twixt her and thee.

“ Now dost thou know 1130
Thy doom, fell Scourge of Man, and canst discern
The future of thy life.”

The Holy God

To Eve in anger spake :

“ Take thyself hence
Far from these scenes of joy. From this day forth
Obedience shalt thou yield to Adam's will,
And in the fear of him shalt expiate
The error of thy deeds, humbled and vext
By keen remorse, till Death ensue. Meanwhile, 1140
With weeping and with moans and bitter pains
Shalt thou bring forth thy daughters and thy sons
To people Earth's domain.”

Then to the Man

The Eternal King, Lord of the Light of Life,
Announced His dire decree :

“ Now must thou seek
Another home, a realm more joyless far,
And into exile go, in nakedness
1150 And want, shorn of the bliss which thou hast
known

In Paradise. And since with evil mind
Thou didst commit this crime, I do decree
That Death, at last, shall break the golden bond
Which now unites thy body and thy soul.
Henceforth thy days shall pass in arduous toil
And from the ground shalt thou thyself now seek
Thy sustenance, and eat thy daily bread
By sweat of brow so long as thou dost live,
And until fell Disease of which, alas,
1160 Thou didst partake in the forbidden fruit
Doth strike thee at the heart. Then shalt thou
die.”

Thus did our writ of Evil take its rise
In righteous wrath, entailing World-wide woe.
The Lord of glory, Guardian of Mankind,
In goodly raiment robed the guilty pair
And bade them hide their nudeness from the gaze
Of mortal eyes. Their sentence once pronounced
They bent their mournful steps from Paradise
To seek a narrower sphere.

Behind them closed 1170

The glistening gates of their once joyous home,
Its comforts and delights forever lost !
And at the Lord's behest, one of His host
Of holy Angels, armed with fiery sword,
Kept constant guard to hinder their return.

Thenceforth no traitorous or crime-guilty man
May enter there ; for he who guards that realm
Of blissful life, dear to the pure in heart,
Hath might and strength as Warden of the Lord.

Nor even then, would mighty God, at once 1180
Despoil the guilty pair of all their joys,
E'en though His presence He had now withdrawn ;
But for their comfort, still he let shine forth
The vault of heaven adorned with radiant stars,
And of the treasures of the Earth, He gave
With open hand ; and for their use He bade
The denizens of Earth and Sea increase
And multiply, and trees bring forth their fruit.
Sin-stained, they thenceforth sojourned in a land
More sorrowful, a region and a home 1190
More barren far of every earthly Good
Than were those blissful Seats from which alas
By Sin they were expelled.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

How much valuable literature has been lost to the world by war, by vandalism, by accident, and by ignorance, will, of course, never be known ; but we have historical data sufficient to show that treasures almost innumerable have disappeared from the face of the earth beyond reasonable hope of recovery.

It is well known, as shown by Mr. William Shepard in a recent article, that "the dramatic literature of Greece was one of its greatest glories. At the time of Aristophanes it is estimated that fully two thousand dramas had been produced : only forty-two have come down to us. From Æschylus we have only seven, out of a total of seventy ; seven also of Sophocles, out of a hundred or more ; and nineteen of Euripides, out of a possible ninety-two. The comic writers have suffered the most, and of the greatest of them, Menander, hardly a vestige remains. Goethe said that he would gladly have given one-half of Roman poetry for a single play of that master. In the few lines that have come down to us he recognized the touch of a supreme genius.

"But this is not the worst. The greatest lyric poetess of all times was Sappho. Only two odes and a few fragmentary lines are left to tantalize us with a sense of our loss. From Pindar we have some odes, indeed, but not the hymns and dirges and dithyrambs which the ancient critics considered his real masterpieces.

"Many of these treasures perished in the invasions of the Goths and Vandals, many were destroyed by the ignorant or the superstitious in the Dark Ages.

"The library of four hundred thousand manuscripts collected by the Ptolemys was burned during the siege of Alexandria by Julius Caesar. The famous library in the same city known as the Serapeum which had been enriched by Pergamon and given to Cleopatra by Mark Antony, was partly burned, partly dispersed, at the storming of the temple of Jupiter by the Christians during the reign of Theodosius the Great.

"The shells of the German army in 1870 fired the great Strasburg library, when many manuscripts and printed books of great value were destroyed, among others the earliest-printed Bible and the records of the famous law-suits between Gutenberg, the first printer, and his partners, upon which depended the claim of Gutenberg, to the invention of the art of printing.

"Frightful losses were also sustained when the great monastic libraries were plundered in the time of the Reformation. The books and manuscripts were scattered to stuff broken windows, clean boots, and light fires, or were sold to grocers and soap-sellers as wrapping paper. One merchant for forty shillings bought two noble libraries which supplied him with paper stock enough to last for ten years. No doubt many of the most precious ancient manuscripts perished in this way as well as works more or less valuable of mediæval writers.

"A curious heap of scorched leaves, looking like a monster wasps'-nest may be seen in a glass case in the British Museum. It is a relic of a fire that occurred in 1731 at Ashburnam House, Westminster, and partly destroyed the Cotton manuscripts. By the exercise of much skill a portion was restored, though apparently charred past recognition. The remnants were carefully separated, leaf by leaf, soaked in a chemical solution, and then pressed between leaves of transparent paper.

"Ignorance has cost the world priceless treasures in books and manuscripts. Just before the French Revolution a fine copy of the first edition of the *Golden Legend* was used leaf by leaf to light the librarian's fires. A copy of Caxton's *Canterbury Tales*, with woodcuts, worth at least two thousand dollars, was used to light the vestry fire of the French Protestant Church in St. Martin's le Grand in London some thirty years ago."

NOTE B.

FRANCISCUS JUNIUS AD LECTOREM.

Supervacuum esset, Lector benevole, pluribus verbis hoc in loco repetere, quæ non ita pridem de Paraphrasios hujus Authore attigi p. 248 Observationum nostrarum in Willeramum ; ubi quoque præclarum hunc reconditæ antiquitatis thesaurum acceptum fero summo Præsuli et nunquam non infra merita sua laudato, Jacobo Usserio, Archiepiscopo Armachano et totius Hiberniæ Primati. Per velim interim, mi Lector, abs te mihi ignosci quod editio hæc, ex uno tantum exemplari concinnata, prodit inemendatior ; futura forte correctior, si plures antiqua manu exaratos codices videre contigisset. Ne quis tamen ulla in re operam nostram desideraret, paginas ipsius Manuscripti adversis ubique virgulis inclusi, quo facilius hanc nostram editionem cum ipsis reverendi Antistitis vett. membranis conferant, quibus pretium operæ videbitur. Singulas quoque editionis hujus paginas in lineas distinxī, quo expeditius inveniri possint loca quæ posthac a nobis ex hoc Authore citabuntur, et nostras quoque in eum observationes, Deo Opt. Max. vitam viresque largiente, suis ubique paginis lineisque commodius adaptem. Vale, mi Lector, atque hac interim qualicunque opera nostra propitius fruire.

NOTE C.

Elizabeth Elstob, the author of this work, and one of the most remarkable of the literary characters of the first half of the eighteenth century, was the daughter of Ralph Elstob, a merchant living at Newcastle. Her mother, to whom she owed the first steps in her strange and extraordinary education, died when her child was scarcely nine years of age, and her guardians, on the death of the mother, strongly discouraged the young girl in her passion for literary studies, insisting that literature was not a proper vocation for one of her sex ! In spite of all opposition, however, she persistently held to her self-chosen course in life, and attained eminence as linguist, Saxonist, and *littérateur*. But after the death of her brother, she met with so little patronage and so many disappointments that she migrated to Worscestershire, where for some time she supported herself by teaching. Sub-

sequently, she became acquainted with Mr. George Ballard and the Rev. Mr. Capon, the latter of whom kept a boarding-school in Gloucestershire, and through the kind offices of these two gentlemen, an annuity of £21.0.0 was raised among Miss Elstob's friends, in order to enable her to pursue her literary work. This annuity was assumed by Queen Caroline, who was pleased to continue it until her own death. After this, Elizabeth Elstob, mistress of eight languages besides her own, was received into the family of the Dowager Duchess of Portland [1739] as governess to her children, and remained in this position till her death, May 30, 1756.

There is a quaint note on the title-page of the *Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue* that will well bear to be reproduced in this connection :

"Our earthly possessions are truly enough called a *Patrimony*, as derived to us by the industry of our Fathers ; but the language that we speak is our *Mother-tongue*, and who so proper to play the critics in this as the *Females*.

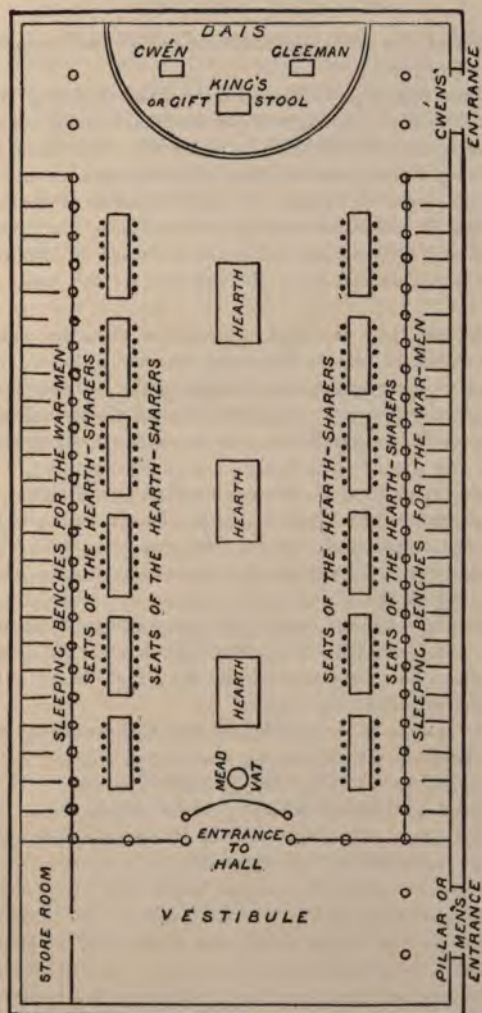
"In a letter from a Right Reverend Prelate to the author."

The full title of Elizabeth Elstob's translation of the Homily on the birthday of St. Gregory is as follows : *An English-Saxon Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory, anciently used in the English-Saxon Church*, giving an account of the conversion of the English from paganism to Christianity. Translated into modern English with notes, etc. By Eliz. Elstob, London. Printed by W. Bowyer, MDCCIX.

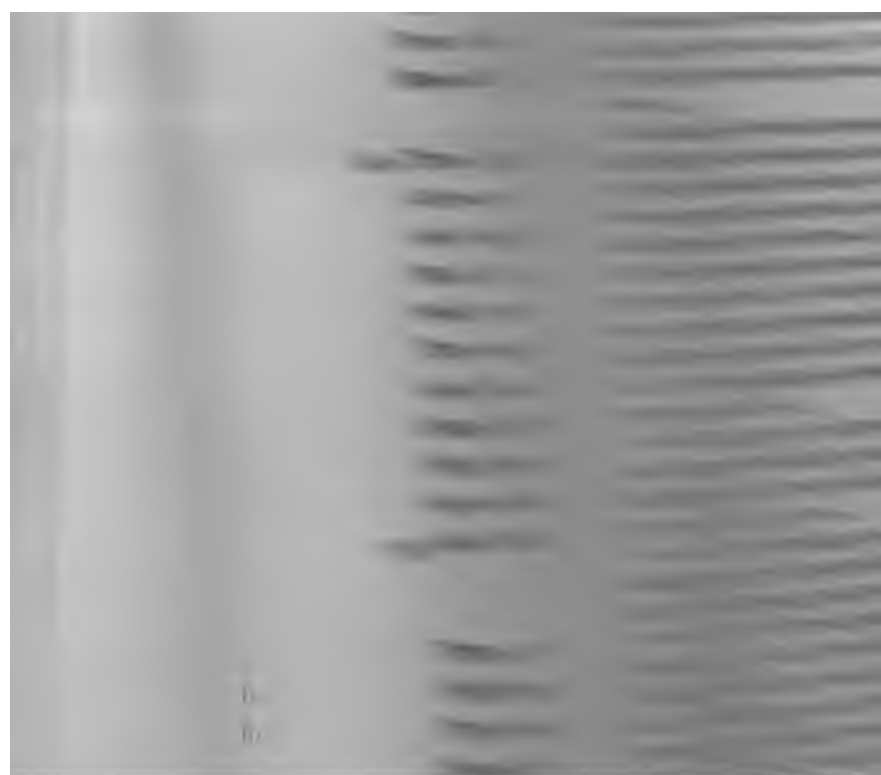
We have given this title in full because it is chiefly from Nichol's *Life of Bowyer*, Elizabeth Elstob's publisher, that we have taken the brief story of her life as given above.

NOTE D.

There is no full description in Anglo-Saxon literature of the Mead-hall,—the building rendered famous by the death-struggle between the Grendel and Beowulf ; but from the many allusions to such a kingly and warrior resort, which occur in the poem of the *Beowulf* itself, no less than from the many hints and suggestions that we find scattered throughout Scandinavian and Teutonic literature, we can form a



GROUND PLAN OF A MEAD-HALL.



tolerably correct idea of the general plan and internal arrangements of such a festive Hall.

Viewed from without, the Mead-hall consisted of a long building surmounted by a high, slanting roof, ornamented with curved gables, and flanked by low-roofed aisles on either side ; the whole resembling, in a very marked manner, the architecture of some of our ancient English church buildings. At each extremity of the wall of the low aisle, on the South side, was an entrance, protected by a porch ; that at the West end being the " Pillar " or men's door ; and that at the East end being the entrance for the Saxon *cwéns* or wives.

Internally, the Hall consisted of a spacious nave, the main roof rising high above the marble chequered floor and supported by massive pillars ; while along the whole length of the roof might be seen the heavy cross-beams which supported it, and which looked, from the floor beneath, like a frail lattice-work. Running along the sides of the Hall and extending from the eaves of the main roof, down to within some fifteen feet of the marble floor, were richly carved panels, commemorative of great battles and heroic deeds ; while the space between these panels and the floor was hung with " golden webs " or embroidered hangings that adorned the whole length of the lower sides of the Hall.

At the East or upper end of the Hall was a dais or platform,—the place of honour,—where the King, the *Cwén*, the chief thanes, and the King's gleeman had their stools while the King, himself, sat on a stool of state, called the " gift stool."

Down the middle of the building, at equal distances apart, were three large hearths, on which the log fires burned brightly, the smoke rising to the roof and escaping through covered outlets.

On each side of the Hall were long tables reaching from the dais on the upper end, to within a few feet of the door, on the lower end. These tables were flanked, on either side, by long rows of seats ; some of them beautifully carved and inlaid with precious metals. These were the seats of the King's "*hearth sharers*." While enjoying the festivities of the Hall, swords, and shields, and helmets were hung up against the tapestry overhead, so that the walls incessantly flashed with myriad gleams as the flames from the fires struck the polished armour.

Behind the tapestry, at night-time, when the warriors retired to

rest the tapestry hangings were drawn aside, and the side aisles were exposed to view. But they contained little worth seeing. There was simply a row of benches running at right angles to the length of the Hall, and serving as couches for the warriors. Still, when the Hall was wrapped in quiet, and the fires were smouldering; when the King and Cwén, and gleeman had retired to rest, the walls of these side aisles looked, in the gloom, like a deserted armoury, for the war-men had divested themselves of their arms and each suit of mail was hung over the head of its owner.

NOTE E.

In Anglo-Saxon poetry *similes* are exceedingly rare. In the whole poem of the *Beowulf* there occur but five and these are of the simplest description. The ring-prowed bark of the hero, as it cuts through the water, is compared to a bird. The glare that shines from the eyes of the Grendel as he stalks over the moor on his murderous mission to Hróthgár's Mead-hall is compared to fire. The nails of the monster's fingers are described as hand-spurs of steel. The glow of mellow light in the subaqueous home of the She-wolf is compared to the early morning sunshine; and finally the melting away of Beowulf's sword when he strikes off the head of the lifeless eoten is likened to the melting of ice.

NOTE F.

Canon XX. of the Second Council of Nicæa [A.D. 787], commonly called by both the Eastern and Western branches of the Church the Seventh Ecumenical Council, is as follows:

"We decree that from the present time there shall be no Celibate Houses for monks and nuns together, because they lead to scandal and become a stumbling-block to the many. But if any persons with their kindred prefer to renounce the world and to follow the single life, the men must retire into a monastery for men, and the women into a monastery for women. For with that God is well pleased. But let the double monasteries which have been in existence hitherto remain in accordance with the rule of the holy Father Basil, and let

them be places perfectly conformed to his arrangement. Let not monks and nuns live in the same monastery, for adultery [*i. e.*, fornication on the part of the nun who was regarded as Christ's bride] interferes with that living together. Let not a monk be permitted to talk freely and in private with a nun, or a nun with a monk. Let not a monk sleep in a monastery of women, and let not a nun eat together with a monk alone. And when the necessities of life are brought from the male part of the monastery to the nuns, let the Abbess of the monastery, together with some Sister of mature years, receive them outside the gate. But if it should happen that some monk should wish to see a kinswoman among the nuns, let him talk with her for a short time and in few words in the presence of the Abbess."

The original Greek of this Canon as given in the *Πηδάλιον*, published at Athens, 1841, is as follows :

Κανὼν Κ'.

Ἀπὸ τοῦ παρόντος ὀρίζομεν, μὴ γίνεσθαι διπλοῦν Μοναστήριον, ὅτι κἀνδάλον, καὶ πρόσκομμα τοῖς πολλοῖς γίνεται τοῦτο. Εἰ δὲ τινες μετὰ συγγενῶν προαιροῦνται ἀποτάξασθαι, καὶ τῷ μονήρει βίῳ κατακολουθεῖν, τοὺς μὲν ἄνδρας, δέον ἀπιέναι εἰς ἀνδρῶν Μοναστήριον, καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας εἰσιέναι ἐν γυναικείῳ Μοναστηρίῳ. Ἐπὶ τούτῳ γὰρ εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεός. Τὰ δὲ ὄντα ἕως τοῦ νῦν διπλᾶ, κρατεῖτωσαν, κατὰ τὸν Κανόνα τοῦ ἁγίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλείου, καὶ κατὰ τὴν διαταγὴν αὐτοῦ, οὕτω διατυπούσθωσαν. Μὴ διατάσθωσαν ἐν ἐνὶ Μοναστηρίῳ Μοναχοὶ καὶ Μονάστρια μοιχεῖα γὰρ μεσολλαβεῖ τὴν συνδικήτησιν. Μὴ ἐχέτω Μοναχὸς παρῆρσίαν πρὸς Μονάστριαν, ἢ Μονάστρια πρὸς Μοναχὸν, ἰδίᾳ προσομιλεῖν. Μὴ κοίταξέσθω Μοναχὸς ἐν γυναικείῳ Μοναστηρίῳ. Μὴ δέ συνεσθιέτω Μονάστρια καταμόνας. Καὶ ὅτε τὰ ἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου παρὰ τοῦ ἀνδρῶν μέρους πρὸς τὰς κανονικὰς ἀποκομίζονται, ἔξωθεν τῆς πύλης ταῦτα λαμβανέτω ἡ Ἡγουμένη τοῦ γυναικείου Μοναστηρίου, μετὰ γραὸς τινος Μοναστρίας. Εἰ δὲ συμβῇ, συγγενῇ τινα ἐθέλῃν θαάσασθαι Μοναχὸν, ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ τῆς Ἡγουμένης, ταύτῃ προσομιλεῖτω διὰ μικρῶν καὶ βραχέων λόγων.

NOTE G.

Observations on the History of Cædmon. By FRANCIS PALGRAVE,
Esq. F.R.S., F.S.A., in a Letter to HENRY ELLIS, Esq. F.R.S.,
Secretary.

"It has not perhaps been hitherto remarked that the well-known history of Cædmon has its exact parallel. We learn from a fragment, entitled "Præfatio in librum antiquum linguæ Saxonicæ conscriptum;" published amongst the Epistles of Hincmar Bishop of Rhemes (Bibliotheca Patrum, Paris, 1644, vol. xvi., p. 609), that Ludovicus Pius, being desirous to furnish his subjects with a version of the Holy Scriptures, applied to a Saxon Bard of great talent and fame. The Poet, a peasant or husbandman, when entirely ignorant of his art, had been instructed in a dream to render the precepts of the Divine Law into the verse and measure of his native language. His translation, now unfortunately lost, to which the fragment was prefixed, comprehended the whole of the Bible. The text of the original was interspersed with mystic allusions; and the beauty of the composition was so great, that, in the opinion of the writer of the preface, no reader, perusing the verse, could doubt the source of the poetic inspiration of the Bard.

I have endeavoured to show on another occasion (*Hist. of England*, vol. i., p. 168), that the marvellous part of Cædmon's history, as told by Bede, may in some degree be explained by natural causes. But it is scarcely possible that the same extraordinary, though not incredible, development of poetical talent should have occurred both in Britain and in Gaul. And the history of the so-called Cædmon, will perhaps rather appear as one of those tales floating upon the breath of tradition, and localized from time to time in different countries and in different ages.

But, whatever may have been the true history of our Anglo-Saxon paraphrast, there are strong reasons for supposing that his real name has not been preserved. Most, if not all, of the Anglo-Saxon proper names are significant; and whenever we meet with a name which cannot be fairly resolved into Anglo-Saxon roots, bearing a known and intelligible meaning, we have always the strongest presumptive reasons for supposing that it has been borrowed from some other tongue. Now to the name *Cædmon*, whether considered as a simple or as a compound, no plain and definite meaning can be assigned, if

the interpretation be sought in the Anglo-Saxon language : whilst that very same name *is* the initial word of the Book of Genesis in the Chaldee paraphrase, or Targum of Onkelos : בקדמין *b' Cadmin* or *b' Cadmon*, (the *b'* is merely a prefix), being a literal translation of *b' Raschith*, or "In principio," the initial word of the original Hebrew text. It is hardly necessary to observe that the books of the Bible are denominated by the Jews from their initial words : they quote and call *Genesis* by the name of "*b' Raschith*," the *Chaldaic* *Genesis* would be quoted and called by the name of "*b' Cadmin*," and this custom adopted by them at least as early as the time of St. Jerome, has continued in use until the present day.

But in addition to the value of the word *Cadmon* as denoting the Chaldaic Book of Genesis, the name of *Adam Cadmon* (אדם קדמון) also holds a most important station in Cabalistic theology ; the adjective or epithet (קדמון) *Cadmon* in pure Hebrew signifies *Eastern*, *Oriental*, or *from the East* ; and until we can suggest a better explanation of the name given to the Anglo-Saxon poet, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion, that using the Targum as his text, and being also familiar with the Cabalistic doctrines, he assumed the name of *Cadmon* either from the Book which he translated, or from the Cabalistic nomenclature : or that, having arrived in Britain from the East, he designated himself as the Eastern visitor or pilgrim.

The numerous episodes, especially those relating to the fallen angels, introduced in the Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of Genesis, possess an oriental character. There was no Latin version of the Bible in which they could be found, and it may be strongly suspected that they are of Rabbinical origin. No small portion of the allegorical literature, as well as of the philosophy, of the middle ages may be distinctly traced to Rabbinical sources ; and the supposition that an Anglo-Saxon might be sufficiently acquainted with the Hebrew and Chaldaic languages to enable him to derive this information, is not attended with any improbability.

Duns Scotus was profoundly versed in the Oriental tongues. Venerable Bede himself could read Hebrew ; and the fervent zeal with which the study of the Holy Scriptures was pursued during that period of ecclesiastical history included between the age of Saint Jerome and the eleventh century, might easily have induced an Anglo-Saxon monk, or even a layman, during his residence in Palestine, to acquire a knowledge of the language of the Old Testament,

and also of that cognate dialect in which its most valuable interpretation is preserved.

The obscurity attending the origin of the Cædmonian poems will perhaps increase the interest excited by them. Whoever may have been their author, their remote antiquity is unquestionable. In poetical imagery and feeling they excel all the other early remains of the North. And I trust I may be allowed to congratulate our Society in having determined to commence their series of Anglo-Saxon publications, by a work which belongs not only to Englishmen, but to every branch of the great Teutonic family."

Mr. Daniel H. Haigh, in his work on the *Anglo-Saxon Sagas*, has the following remarks in reference to Sir Francis Palgrave's criticism :

"The theory that sagas, originally English, were carried to the continent, and formed the basis of a very popular cycle of romances, will be found to be borne out by facts which will be adduced in the following pages, and has its exact parallel in the circumstances of the *Heliand*. We know that the poetical works of our Cædmon embraced the whole series of Scripture history, yet only a part thereof, relating the principal events of Genesis and Exodus, and a fragment treating of one of the events of the Captivity in Babylon, remain to us. The *Heliand* contains the Gospel story ; and not only is it perfectly Cædmonian in its style, but there is a tradition which evidently relates to it, that in the reign of Louis the Pious, a herdsman received poetical inspiration in his slumbers, and on awaking turned the whole Scripture narrative, of the Old and New Testaments, into excellent verse. Here is undeniably Beda's story of Cædmon, localised in Germany ; and it is very probable that the *Heliand* is one of the volumes of Cædmon's paraphrase, carried to Germany by an Anglo-Saxon missionary, and translated into the old Saxon dialect."

And Mr. Haigh adds in a note "with regard to the name, it has remained amongst us to this day (Cadmon) and in each of its elements it has its correspondents in other Anglo-Saxon names—Cædwealh, Cædbæd, Tilmon, Tytmon."

NOTE H.

In both poems the domain and palace of the Arch-Traitor are spoken of as being situated in the "North," or "Northwest" quarter of the Empyrean ; and so strong a hold has this idea taken on the

mind of Christendom that we meet with it in the works of some of the greatest writers, as, for instance, Augustine, Tasso, and Shakespeare. In *Henry VI.*, v., iii., Satan is styled "the monarch of the North." It is possible, that this tradition may have been founded on a passage in Isaiah xiv., 12, 13, "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North."

Whether or not this is the true explanation of the widespread idea of making the North the domain of the great Lucifer before his fall, is open to question. The very name Lucifer, "son of the morning," clearly signifies a "bright star," probably what we call the morning star, and in the above passage from Isaiah it is a symbolical representation of the king of Babylon, in his splendour and in his fall. Its application, from St. Jerome downwards, to Satan in his expulsion from heaven, arises probably from the fact that the Babylonian Empire is in Scripture represented as the type of tyrannical and self-idolising power, and is especially connected with the empire of the Evil One in the Apocalypse. The fall of its material power before the unseen working of the providence of God is therefore a type of the defeat of all manifestations of the tyranny of Satan. This application of the name "Lucifer" as a proper name of the Devil is plainly ungrounded; but the magnificence of the imagery of the prophet, far transcending in grandeur the fall of Nebuchadnezzar to which it immediately refers, has naturally given a colour to the symbolical interpretation of the passage, and fixed that application in our modern language.

NOTE I.

In his *Life of Milton*, Professor Masson says: "Since 1639, when Milton lived in the St. Bride's Churchyard lodging, he had been teaching his two nephews, and had had the younger nephew, Johnny Phillips, boarding with him entirely; when he removed in 1640 to the house in Aldersgate Street, the elder nephew, Edward Phillips, also came under his roof; and in 1643, after his wife had deserted him, and his father had come to live with him, he had received into his house, as boarders or day-boarders, a few additional pupils.

How many there were we do not know: probably, with the two nephews, not more than eight or a dozen at most."

Edward Phillips had four or five years' instruction under Milton and in accordance with Milton's peculiar ideas of education, and he has left an account, and a most interesting one, of Milton's method of training boys of from ten to fifteen years of age.

It is in this account that the elder Phillips tells of the text-books used by his uncle in teaching; and in this list we find the *De Sphæra* of Joannes De Sacro Bosco. This is the famous John Holywood, an Englishman [d. 1256], whose treatise *De Sphæra*, often re-edited and republished, was the most popular manual on Astronomy during the Middle Ages.

NOTE J.

From among the many curious and interesting points of correspondence between Cædmon and Milton we may adduce the following as instances of the similarity of thought, imagery, and even of diction between the two poets.

In the Anglo-Saxon poem when Satan has recovered from the stupor caused by his fall through Chaos to Hell, and begins to realise his surroundings, he exclaims:

Is thes ænga stede ungelíc swíthe
Thám othrum the we ær cúthon
Héah on heofon-ricc.

This straitened place

*Oh! how unlike those other seats where once
In Heaven's high Kingdom, etc.*

Similarly in Milton. At the very opening of his epic, where he depicts Satan and his hosts as lying in deepest Hell, and after describing, in brief, their place of torment, the poet exclaims:

Oh, how unlike the place from which they fell!

Here the similarity in *wording* is most striking.

Nor is this similarity less marked in some of the *imagery* employed by both poets.

Cædmon, in his description of the upward flight of the Fiend from the Gates of Hell on his adventurous enterprise of the ruin of Man, tells us that he,

Wand him up thanon
Hwearf him thurh tha hell-dora.
Wheeled upwards thence
Circling through the doors of Hell.

Milton tells how Satan, after his parley with the guardians of Hell-gate:

Sprang upward, like a pyramid of fire,

and his verse in several passages carries out the Cædmonic idea of spiral movement.

Again, the Junian manuscript has an illumination of the Deity pronouncing sentence on the Serpent where the reptile is depicted as



standing upright on his coils listening to his doom, and although the text itself is silent on the subject, yet the drawing shows very clearly the current tradition that before the triumph of the Devil over Man, the Serpent did not necessarily have to crawl prone on his belly.

This tradition we find fully developed in Milton's epic. He tells us that Satan :

. . . toward Eve
Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold, a surging maze ; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes ;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant.

These lines might be taken as the poetic description of the monastic illumination ; or, on the other hand, the drawing might equally well serve as an illustration of Milton's verse.

NOTE K.

" The three kingdoms, Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso, look out on one another like compartments of a great edifice ; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled up there, stern, solemn, awful ; Dante's World of Souls ! It is, at bottom, the sincerest of all poems ; sincerity here, too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts, and it goes deep and through long generations into ours. It has all been as if molten in the hottest furnace of his soul. It has made him lean for many years. Nor the general whole only ; every compartment of it is worked out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visibility. Each answers to the other ; each finds its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the Middle Ages, rendered forever rhythmically visible there. Through all objects he pierces, as it were, down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, how he paints. He has a great power of vision ; seizes the very type of a

thing ; presents that, and nothing more. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him. Tacitus is not briefer, more condensed ; and then in Dante it seems a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word ; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what sharp, decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter ; cuts into the matter as with a pen of fire. The very movements in Dante have something brief, swift, decisive, almost military. The fiery, swift, Italian nature of the man, so silent, passionate, with its quick, abrupt movements, its silent, 'pale rages,' speaks itself in his verses. His painting is not graphic only : brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night ; taken on the wider scale, it is every way noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her lover, what qualities in that ! A thing woven as out of rainbows on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood is it, too. She speaks of '*questa forma*' so innocent ; and how, even in the pit of woe, it is a solace that he will never part from her. Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai* ! And the raking winds in that *aer bruno*, whirl them away again, forever ! I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love ; like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft, like a child's young heart ; and then that stern, sore, saddened heart ! I do not agree with much modern criticism, in greatly preferring the *Inferno* to the two other parts of the *Divina Commedia*. Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism of taste, and is like to be a transient feeling. The *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*, especially the former, one would almost say, is even more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that Purgatorio, Mountain of Purification, an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If sin is so fatal, and hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in repentance, too, is man purified ; repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The trembling of the ocean waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering Two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned ; never-dying hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of demons and reprobates is under foot ; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher to the throne of mercy itself. 'Pray for me,' the denizens of that Mount of Pain all

say to him. 'Tell my Giovanna to pray for me, my daughter Giovanna; I think her mother loves me no more.' They toil painfully up by that winding steep, bent down like corbels of a building, some of them crushed together so for the sin of pride; yet, nevertheless, in years, and ages, and æons, they shall have reached the top, Heaven's gate, and by mercy been admitted in. The joy, too, of all when one has prevailed; the whole mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance, and got its sin and misery left behind, I call all this a noble embodiment of a true noble thought. But indeed the three compartments materially support one another, are indispensable to one another. The *Paradiso*, a kind of inarticulate music to me, is the redeeming side of the *Inferno*; the *Inferno* without it were untrue. All three make up the true Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of the Middle Ages; a thing forever memorable, forever true, in the essence of it, to all men. It was, perhaps, delineated in no human soul with such depth of veracity as in this of Dante's; a man sent to sing it, to keep it long memorable. Very notable with what brief simplicity he passes out of the every-day reality into the invisible one; and in the second or third stanza we find ourselves in the World of Spirits, and dwell there as among things palpable, indubitable. To Dante they were so; the real world, as it is called, and its facts, were but the threshold to an infinitely higher fact of a world. At bottom, the one was as preternatural as the other. Has not each man a soul? He will not only be a Spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible fact; he believes it, sees it; is the poet of it, in virtue of that."

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